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ABSTRACT

The serial "Center Stage" is designed to provide a forum for the presentation and discussion of effective teaching methods, ideas, and experiences of the faculty at Broome Community College (BCC), in Binghamton, New York. Volume 3 includes seven issues, focusing on the following themes: (1) human discovery, including articles on "Columbus and the Discovery of Discovery," the nature works of Barry Lopez, and reading and writing assignments on the discovery theme; (2) moral reasoning and ethical issues; (3) personal perspectives on assessment, including outcomes assessment and portfolio assessment; (4) multicultural education, including articles on foreign language instruction, cross-cultural linkages, and transcultural nursing; (5) a celebration of teachers and teaching at BCC; (6) problem solving, including articles on myths about problem solving, useful problem solving characteristics, problem solving in tech-prep and in the workplace, and using problem solving to teach problem solving; and (7) civic education, including articles on promoting civic competence, the meaning of democracy, and community service. (MAB)

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Center Stage

A Platform for the Discussion of Teaching/Learning Ideas
Broome Community College -- Binghamton, New York 13902

Volume 3 Number 1
October 15, 1992

"Human Discovery" is the theme of this month's Center Stage, as it is of the BCC academic Year. The theme not only acknowledges the 500th anniversary of Columbus's first voyage to the New World but also recognizes discovery as a human phenomenon. The articles in this issue consider several approaches to the discovery topic.

In his article "Columbus and the Discovery of Discovery," Lorenz Firsching explores the ambiguity that surrounds discovery in Western culture: we venerate discoverers but fear the results of their endeavors.

The epigraph for Dick Stoner's article is taken from the log of Christopher Columbus. It quotes Columbus writing about his intention to record everything he sees and experiences on his journey. That reference to writing leads nicely into Stoner's description of an innovative reading/writing project for integrating the college theme into his English classes .

Russ Littlefield's article examines the nature works of Barry Lopez. In the late twentieth century, when there is so little new territory left to discover, Lopez suggests that we need to change our traditional exploitative view of the natural world.

And finally, Ralph Holloway's inspiring retrospective of his teaching career reminds us that the most important voyages of discovery are the intellectual ones undertaken by our students.

Ann Sova, Editor

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Columbus and the Discovery of Discovery

Lorenz J. Firsching, History and Social Science

Curiosity and inventiveness are universal human traits. And all societies honor those whose discoveries improve their lives. In traditional China, for example, the "sage emperors" are celebrated for their inventions of agriculture, silk culture, writing, and so on. Actual historical figures are also honored, such as the official Li Bing, who designed the system of dikes and canals which controlled flooding on the Yangtze river; temples dedicated to Li Bing may be found throughout China.

> Yet there is also a deep-seated ambiguity about discovery and discoverers in Western culture.

Great discoverers are of course given important places in the popular culture of Western Civilization. Names such as Newton, Edison, Einstein, and Salk produce immediate associations in the minds of most people. Yet there is also a deep-seated ambiguity about discovery and discoverers in Western culture. Alexander Pope wrote of Isaac Newton, "Nature, and Nature's laws lay hid in night:/God said, **Let Newton be!** and all was light," and Voltaire celebrated Newton as the representative of the triumph and glory of human reason. Yet for William Blake, Newton became a symbol of the evil effects of discovery, of the arrogance and cold rationality that denies beauty and religious truth. Of Newton, Blake wrote, "The Atoms of Democritus/And Newton's Particles of Light/Are sands upon the Red sea shore/Where Israel's tents do shine so bright."

One of the most powerful images of discovery, and one which reflects the ambiguous place of discovery in Western culture, is the opening sequence of Stanley Kubrick's 1968 film 2001: A Space Odyssey. [Readers are advised here to watch the first twenty minutes of 2001. In fact, it might be a good idea to watch the entire movie, and not come back to this essay.] Kubrick depicts the discovery of the use of bones as tools by a group of proto-humans somewhere in prehistoric Africa. The creatures are saved and empowered by their discovery, yet at the same time they use their discovery to kill their fellows. The final image, in which a bone tossed into the air dissolves into a twenty-first century space ship, links the ambiguity of this first human discovery with our present fascinations (and fears) with discovery.

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Discovery and Redemption in the Nature Works of Barry Lopez

Russell Littlefield, English

American nature writing, it should surprise no one to learn, is about discovery. With less and less wilderness to discover, however, the emphasis has shifted from what is being discovered to the process of discovery itself. What this means is illustrated by the work of Barry Lopez, one of the most provocative of contemporary writers dealing with human beings' relationship to the wild landscape. In The *Rediscovery of North America*, prompted by the Columbus quincentenary, he writes about the necessity of looking at North America from a different perspective than that of Columbus and consequent explorers who "in the name of distant and abstract powers . . . began an appropriation of the place, a seizure of its people, its elements, whatever could be carried off."

Changing perspective is not easy. "Appropriation" permeates our history and our culture: "the assumption that one is due wealth in North America, reverberates in the journals of people on the Oregon Trail, in the public speeches of the nineteenth-century industrialists, and in twentieth century politics." Consequently, we are now facing a "crisis of culture" of which the environmental crisis is the most notable symptom. It is possible, still possible, he believes to escape this mindset and put ourselves in a different relationship with the "New World" (to rediscover North America) but it involves recognition of the cultural assumptions, such as the right of appropriation, which have the force of prejudice and which permeate our science, our education, and our literature.

Escape from preconception and prejudice as a precondition for discovery is a constant theme in Lopez's work

Escape from preconception and prejudice as a precondition for discovery is a constant theme in Lopez's work. One finds it, for example, in *Of Wolves and Men* which he published in 1978. The book looks at wolves from several points of view including that of scientists, native peoples, and ranchers. What the wolf is, he concludes, depends on how predisposition and imagination serve desire:

> We create wolves. The methodology of science creates a wolf just as surely as does the metaphysical vision of a native American, or the enmity of a cattle baron. . . . It is only by *convention* [italics mine] that the first is considered enlightened observation, the second fanciful anthropomorphism, and the third agricultural necessity.

The same theme also helps clarify two difficult books of experimental fiction, now commonly packaged together, called *Desert Notes, Reflections in the Eye of a Raven*, first published in 1976 and *River Notes: The Dance of Herons*, published in 1979. The introduction to *Desert Notes*, for example, is a complex metaphor addressing the force of habit and cultural conditioning. To create the metaphor, he places one of the most common and significant artifacts of modern culture, the automobile, in what has traditionally been a place for religious retreat, a place by definition a wilderness, the desert. He tells us how in driving across the desert one day, he decides to let go of the steering wheel. With the vehicle still moving, he changes to the passenger seat. "I stared at the empty driver's seat. I could see the sheen where I'd sat for years." He leaves the passenger seat and gets out of the vehicle. He actually runs away from it and then returns. He gets in the back and pulls his bicycle out. He bicycles away until the vehicle is only a speck and then catches up with it again. He zigzags in front of the vehicle. Finally he abandons the bicycle, runs alongside the car and shifts it into neutral. He gets in and rides as it glides to a stop. "Until then," he writes, "I did not understand how easily the vehicle's tendencies of direction and movement could be abandoned, together with its systems of roads, road signs, and stop lights. By a series of strippings such as this one enters the desert." Freeing oneself from preconception is exactly what one must do to enter the pieces, the desert, that comprise the rest of *Desert Notes*. Again and again in these pieces, our normal perceptions of the way the world is ordered are challenged. In one piece, for example, the narrator recommends, if we really want to understand ravens, that we bury ourselves in the desert with only our eyes uncovered, looking up at the basalt cliffs where the ravens stay. We must wait like this until one generation of ravens has died. One bird of the new generation will find us. We must be careful, though, because he will say that "he knows nothing."

...many of the pieces in *Desert Notes* as well as in *River Notes* have about them the mythopoeic quality of native American folklore, another way of seeing.

As the advice for understanding ravens indicates, many of the pieces in *Desert Notes* as well as in *River Notes* have about them the mythopoeic quality of native American folklore, another way of seeing. This is true of "The Search for the Heron," a piece in *River Notes* which, again, explores the difficulty of knowing in new (or old) ways. The narrator wants to understand the heron, a bird he considers inscrutable, but meets with little success. He says that he will consider what anyone has to say about the bird. He will then ask the heron to confirm or deny what is said. If the heron will not answer, he says in another statement of his view that desire can create our conceptions, "I will have to consider making you up."

(Continued on page 5)

Reading and Writing for the Discovery Theme

Richard Stoner, English

"I decided to write down everything I might do and see and experience on this voyage, from day to day, and very carefully...And these things will be a great task." The Log of Christopher Columbus, Robert Fuson, trans.

I am fortunate to teach English courses that allow me to incorporate the yearly campus theme easily into their syllabuses. In fact, I use the theme to make these courses more lively and more relevant for the students. This year's theme on the nature of human discovery has been particularly interesting to plan into my Written Expression and Introduction to Literature courses because of the 500th anniversary of Columbus's adventure (for want of a more politically correct word) and also because of the rich ambiguities contained in the theme's title that permits more abstract investigations with students beyond the historical events to which it pertains. To explore multiple levels of the theme, I have incorporated a series of readings and writing assignments into my composition and literature courses that I expect will exercise students' skills in reading, writing, and critical thinking, and motivate invention and development of ideas for their writing as well.

> I use the theme to make these courses more lively and more relevant for the students.

In both courses the readings convey histories of real people and incidents, but are controversial not only in their portrayal of the subjects but also in their own histories as texts that have undergone many translations and alterations. Students will have to read the historical pieces and also information about the pieces to understand the difficulty of accepting the authenticity and accuracy of documents. These are difficult assignments but I want the students to realize that reading or writing about events is not so simple as they may have thought, or as their school textbooks may have presented.

> I want the students to realize that reading or writing about events is not so simple as they may have thought...

Students in my Written Expression course will read excerpts from Columbus's log of his first voyage. I have copies of Robert Fuson's translation on reserve in the library for them to use. Of course, I encourage them to read the whole log, which is about 200 pages long, but for expediency I have chosen passages which I consider most revealing of Columbus: early entries expressing his fear of mutiny and of his own life taken by an anxious crew; vividly detailed entries describing the flora and fauna of Cuba and Hispaniola; and most interestingly, passages revealing Columbus's complex attitudes toward the natives he meets. In addition, the students have to read Columbus's letter to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella upon his return. A gem of persuasion and obsequiousness, it should elicit student discussion on Columbus's motivations and abilities at persuasion. For both these readings I also am providing articles that discuss the histories of the log and letter and possible glosses by various translators that may have altered Columbus's original text and purpose. These articles should stimulate the students's critical thinking about Columbus's writing and more importantly about relying on the authenticity of any text.

> This process also exposes students to shared writing and editing situations that they may encounter in their work lives.

After each reading the students must record their reactions in a paragraph or more of writing which each student then shares with at least one other student who, guided by prompt questions I provide, writes a critical reaction to the previous student's writing. They write on the PC and then move to different machines to read their classmate's work and to write their reactions. To ensure more honest responses among the students, I have them sign their reactions with the last four numbers of their social security number. Eventually, students return to their own PCs and write about their classmates' comments; finally, they print out all this edited work and keep it in a journal which I will periodically collect to read and grade. In this process the students will find themselves involved in critical thinking, analytic reading, and annotation writing on the assigned piece, on their peer's writing and again on their own work. This process also exposes students to shared writing and editing situations that they may encounter in their work lives.

The journal will also contain a quantity of other writing besides these edited pieces on the assigned readings. During the term students must develop one or more of the following ideas into essays: reviews of speakers and films that the college is presenting in conjunction with the Discovery theme; research of their family roots; and interviews of foreign students and/or new immigrants for their reactions to the "new world." Students have also suggested the following topics: investigating how high school texts are treating exploration history in this new age of sensitivity and political correctness; predicting how America will look and act for the 600th anniversary of Columbus; and composing a glossary of terms related to the history of exploration and

(Continued on page 4)

Why I Teach: A Retrospective

Ralph Holloway, Business

On a warm, sultry day 33 years ago, a recent college graduate made a decision to seek employment in education in difficult economic times that were similar in some respect to those we face today. He wanted to do something meaningful that would utilize his academic background and industrial work experience.

As fate would have it, he was able to secure a personal interview with one of the prime movers of the emerging community college movement and the founding president of what is now BCC. I listened in awe as President Tyrrell shared his hopes and dreams for education in this community. And so it was, that I accepted a teaching position in the Department of Business with the challenge of the motto of SUNY: "Let each become all he is capable of being."

> "Teachers affect eternity for they can never tell where their influence ends."

This presented an intellectual challenge that required a diversity of teaching approaches, and an understanding and appreciation of human differences within a framework of academic freedom. Upon reflection, it was as if President Tyrrell entrusted me with a torch that would light the way for better tomorrows, a torch to be carried, like an olympic runner, with pride because it represented intellectual enlightenment and academic excellence for others to follow. I joined a team of very dedicated staff and faculty. I have often pondered what my legacy to the College would be. As I wrote this article, it became crystal clear that it is the thousands who have come in and gone out over the years who have let me become a positive influence in their lives. "Teachers affect eternity for they can never tell where their influence ends."

Many of these students have assumed very prominent positions in society. Many have contributed their talents by returning to the College in various capacities. It is with pride that I can point to many of these people who chose to take my courses for credit or audit. Those who quickly come to mind are: Rick Behr, Glen Wood, Wayne Lockwood, Bob Fitzgerald, Lori Wahila, Ray VanNess, Mark Stanley, Dennis Walker, George Shea, Aggie Vallone, Marie Davenport, Ester Sabol, Jim Caverly, Gerald and Jane Hlopko, May Rosato, Sandra Foreman, Joan Bandurchin-Pierog, JoAnne Maniago, Nancy Button, Tony Fiorelli, Fran Battisti, Gary Finch, Donna Firenze.

Others are past and present members of the College Board of Trustees, County Legislators and County Executive. The list goes on and on.

"Teachers affect eternity, for they can never tell where their influence ends."

I will soon pass that torch that was entrusted to me to you; hold it high, keep it forever burning bright!

Stoner (from page 3)

classifying them by their political correctness today. In the end I will grade each journal on the student's efforts, on the quantity of entries and inventiveness at writing on topics that have engaged the student in development, research, critical thinking and writing.

The syllabus to Introduction to Literature has allowed me to infuse the theme of discovery through fiction that is based on historical figures who represent the age of discovery. My students are to read a series of short stories written by Gabriel Marquez, the Columbian Nobel winner, and Yukio Mishima, the notorious Japanese writer and artist. These works should expose the students to worlds and characters that emerge from the histories of Simon Bolivar and Tojo. Bertoldt Brecht's play, ***Galileo Galilei***, also should challenge their critical thinking and analytic reading skills. Students will confront a dramatization of the real events surrounding Galileo's trial by the Catholic Church for writing that the earth was not the center of the universe or even of the solar system. However, they will also learn through the extensive preface written by Eric Bentley in their Grove Press text that Brecht took great liberties with history to meet his overtly Communist purposes. To confuse matters more, theater historians are not sure which of several manuscripts, written in German, is Brecht's "authorized" one. Bentley outlines significant changes among the scripts that will force the students to interpret the play not only for its historical inconsistencies but, more importantly, for its complex thematic import that Brecht kept editing and changing. The Grove text also contains helpful critical essays to aid the student in these tasks.

Introduction to Literature students will write about these concerns by using the PC for semi-anonymous peer editing as composition students are doing for the Columbus material. One major question that the students will address is whether the play still works today to thrill audiences to think about a man's heroic resolve over issues that will alter the world permanently. In addition the students will have to separate Brecht's own contemporary purposes for the play from any more current themes.

By sorting out these complexities I expect students in both courses will see that great art as well as historical figures are complicated and demand close attention when they are studied, read, critically analyzed or written about.

Littlefield (from page 2)

He tries various strategies. He asks the cottonwoods, the maples, the wind, the stones, the pine marten, and the bittern, but he doesn't have much success. He concludes that he has been "crippled by his age, by what I have known, as well as by my youth, by what I have yet to learn, in all these inquiries." His inability to discard old learning and trust alternative ways of perceiving stands in his way. Now desperate, he tries something that resembles a native American ritual. He pricks his fingers with the bones of fish the heron has eaten. He makes a fire from a heron's nest and sleeps on the heron's feathers. After four nights, he dreams of the heron who tells him about the beginning of the world, a time when there was no fear. A snake weaves in front of the heron saying there will be fear in the world and it will make people strong. It lashes out, wounding the heron in the shoulder. The heron retaliates, pinning the snake with its bill and says that fear could make people strong but that it would be worth nothing without compassion. He then releases the snake. The narrator awakens.

What one must give away are the conventions that govern ordinary understanding.

When he wakes, he knows "how much had to be given away, how little could ever be asked." What one must give away are the conventions that govern ordinary understanding. He cannot understand the heron by incessant questioning (the western method) and bullying: "The big maples, where you [the heron] have slept since then--I resolved to ask them about your dreams. No; they refused. I was angered and made a fool of myself beating on the trunks with my fists screaming, 'tell me about the bird! It is only a bird!'" To understand the heron, one must accept it on its own terms. One may well fear what this means: the giving up of control, the human penchant for domination. But one must take one's hands off the steering wheel. Only when one does this is it possible to enter the world of the heron.

The dream leaves him feeling "forgiven." He hears the sound of geese flying over him and understands what that means. It is a sign of his redemption, what Lopez calls in a short story called "Night Herons," an "extension of otherly grace." Even though it is winter, he leaps into the river unclothed and, climbing on a rock, sees the heron begin to appear at a bend downstream. He is cleansed. He has begun to understand with new vision.

Understanding the strong theme of tolerance for alternative ways of knowing helps make sense of *Desert Notes* and *River Notes*, but it does not end the possibilities of discovery in the books' pieces.

Understanding the strong theme of tolerance for alternative ways of knowing helps make sense of *Desert Notes* and *River Notes*, but it does not end the possibilities of discovery in the books' pieces. They are strange fictions which deliberately violate our notions of probability and common sense in an effort to liberate us from the tyranny of preconception and prejudice separating us from the landscape of the natural world. What Lopez reveals is that the landscape is in fact a "mindscape," shaped at least as much by what we desire and imagine than by any "reality."

Discovery Presentations

October 21	Film: "The Mission." 2 p.m., AT-200
October 21	Dr. Michael Kinney, "Columbus: A Paradigm of Success." This Phi Theta Kappa lecture will explore the nature of creativity and self-actualization. 3 p.m., B-110.
October 28	Film: "The Black Robe." 2 p.m., AT-200.
November 4	Ron LaFrance, Director of the Native Studies Program at Cornell University, will speak on "Iroquois, the Next 500 Years." 12 noon, AT-200.
November 4	Musicologist Paul Sweeney will address a rarely-considered dimension of the Columbian Exchange, the impact of American music on Europe. Phi Theta Kappa lecture. 3 p.m., B-110.
November 11	Video: "In Search of Columbus." 2 p.m., AT-200.

Firsching (from page 1)

The language used to describe discovery and discoverers reveals that one of the most important sources for our cultural images of discovery is the so-called age of geographic discovery in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In The Advancement of Learning, Francis Bacon wrote "They are ill discoverers that think there is no land, when they can see nothing but sea." Three hundred years later, the inventor and engineer Vannevar Bush, testifying before the United States Congress, spoke of the "endless frontier of knowledge," and he compared discoverers to "lone scouts." Bush was concerned that corporations "were increasingly sending out bigger, better-supplied expeditions into the technological unknown." Such quotations could be multiplied many times over: the image of discovery, whether in the sciences, the arts, or any other field, as the exploration of uncharted lands, the opening of new continents, continues to the present day to resonate powerfully in Western culture.

The ever-changing image of Columbus is guide to the ambiguous place of discovery in the Western mind.

The symbol par excellence of the age of discovery is Christopher Columbus. The ever-changing image of Columbus is guide to the ambiguous place of discovery in the Western mind. And this is particularly true in the United States.

It is a curious and perhaps revealing fact that during the first two and one half centuries of America's existence as an outpost of Western Civilization, Columbus was largely ignored. It was only in the early decades of the nineteenth century that Columbus began to figure in the consciousness of a nation beginning to seek its own identity. The four hundredth anniversary of Columbus's first voyage brought national celebrations and firmly established a popular image of the Great Navigator. Columbus Day was established as a national holiday in 1934, and Columbus the Symbol--if not Columbus the man--has remained central to American mythology ever since.

Of course the image of Columbus has never been without its darker side; indeed, one of the Admiral's very first biographers, Bartolome de Las Casas, contributed mightily to both the positive and negative images of Columbus. In America, three books have done the most to establish the image of Columbus in both its positive and negative senses: Washington Irving's great Romantic biography of 1828, the History of the Life and Voyages of Columbus, Samuel Eliot Morison's best-selling, award winning 1942 biography Admiral of the Ocean Sea, and Kirkpatrick Sale's controversial 1990 book The Conquest of Paradise. In what follows I draw heavily on these three works; but my interest is not in their historical accuracy but rather in what they tell us about Columbus as a symbol of discovery.

A study of Columbus the symbol reveals a curious tendency on the part of the popular minds to construct pairs of opposing images. Three such pairs are especially revealing in terms of the ambiguous place of discovery in Western culture.

Yet there is also a price to be paid for standing alone...

On one level, the popular images of Columbus grapple with the place of the individual in the story of discovery. There is the image of Columbus standing alone, courageously defending his ideas against the ignorant masses and arrogant pundits. Irving wrote of Columbus's "resolute and persevering spirit" and declared that "his imagination...enabled him to form conclusions at which common minds could never have arrived." Morison echoes Irving: "He was a Man alone with God against human stupidity...[and] even against nature and the sea."

Yet there is also a price to be paid for standing alone. Another popular image of Columbus is given prominent place in the works of Irving and Morison. This is the image of Columbus brought home in chains from his third voyage, and later, following his failed fourth voyage, dying in poverty and obscurity. Society, it seems, will have its revenge against the lone individual. Sale notes "No chronicler seems to like talking much about the last year and a half of the admiral's life...and indeed nothing in that time accords well with any picture of the Great Discoverer resting comfortably on his laurels of fame and fortune."

A second pair of images revolves around the process of discovery itself. On one side is the image of the man with a mission, guided by God and his own genius to make the great discovery. Morison describes Columbus as "a Man with a Mission" and admits that this driven sense of mission could at times make Columbus an unattractive figure. But Morison is also at pains to praise Columbus for his "physical courage...untiring persistence and unbreakable will" and Morison insists that Columbus was one of the greatest seamen of his or any other time. (Sale disparages Columbus's seamanship: "The four voyages...are replete with lubberly mistakes, misconceived sailing plans, foolish disregard....") Irving went even farther in praising Columbus's genius: "The mariner who first had the judgment to divine and the intrepidity to brave the mysteries of this perilous deep; and who, by his genius...brought the ends of the earth into communication with each other."

(Continued on page 7)

Firsching (from page 6)

Yet the image of Columbus the genius competes with the image of Columbus as the beneficiary of a happy accident. Oddly, both Irving and Morison also stress this element of luck. Irving writes "It is singular how much the success of this great undertaking depended upon two happy errors." And Morison, after reviewing Columbus's calculations of the size of the earth, adds, "off course this calculation is not logical, but Columbus's mind was not logical. He knew he could make it, and the figures had to fit."

> ...the image of Columbus the genius competes with the image of Columbus as the beneficiary of a happy accident.

The final pair of images deal with the consequences of discovery. On the one hand, discovery leads to wealth, power, fame, and progress, for both the individual and society. Irving again and again emphasizes Columbus's success, the "grandeur of his discovery" and the historical importance of Columbus's achievement. Countless Columbus Day speakers have echoed this image of the Columbian undertaking as resulting in the wealth and power that characterizes twentieth-century America.

But a conflicting image, increasingly important in recent years, depicts Columbus as the destroyer of peaceful Native American societies, the despoiler of a virgin continent. Sale's book is an extended polemic on this theme (and, in its own way, is as false to the historical Columbus as Irving and Morison). "Many of those who know well the cultures that once existed in the New World," Sale writes, "have reason to be less than enthusiastic about celebrating the event that led to the destruction of much of that heritage and the greater part of the people who produced it." Of course, Sale is not the first to see this aspect of the age of discovery. Two centuries ago Samuel Johnson wrote "I do not much wish well to discoveries, for I am always afraid they will end in conquest and robbery."

What to make of these conflicting images? On one side is the image of the courageous individual, inspired by God and his own genius, making a discovery that will lead to wealth and fame. On the other side is the image of the social outcast who makes his discoveries by blind luck, and who unleashes forces of destruction by his effort. These images echo throughout our history. One need only think of the popular image of Edison and his "invention factory," or of Fleming discovering penicillin in a moldy petri dish, or of Schubert dying in poverty and obscurity to realize how we continue to apply these categories to conceptualize discovery.

I began this essay by suggesting that discovery occupies an ambiguous place in Western culture. Discovery touches some of our deepest values: individualism, the pursuit of wealth, the power of reason. But we remain frightened of discovery as well. We fear opening the Pandora's box, and we try to reduce the discoverer to human portions by attributing his discoveries to luck and by secretly rejoicing to see him die in poverty and obscurity. Perhaps this reveals an unresolved tension in the Western mind between our individualistic drives for adventure and change and our social needs for stability and order.

> Discovery touches some of our deepest values: individualism, the pursuit of wealth, the power of reason. But we remain frightened of discovery as well.

Or perhaps not. It may be to read too much into the images of Columbus to see him as the American equivalent of Prometheus. Yet Irving captured something of this when he wrote of Columbus "The narrative of his troubled life is the link which connects the history of the Old World with that of the New." I have no answer to the questions posed in this essay. So perhaps the words of T.S. Eliot can stand in the place of a conclusion.

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

Discovery at BCC

Ann Sova, English

When word of Columbus's discoveries trickled back to Europe, it must have seemed to many, as perhaps it did to Columbus himself, that his voyages and others like them represented an end to limitations--that one could go anywhere and do anything. That feeling of endless possibilities seems to have been a defining quality in the American spirit over several centuries. Perhaps one thing that accounts for our changed perception of Columbus in the late twentieth century is that we have lost that belief in endless possibilities. We now realize that growth is not limitless, that not everyone can become president, and that our tenure on this continent has produced problems we don't know how to solve. This concept produces a challenge for teachers: how can we inspire students to strive for excellence--to discover their own potential--in an era of reduced expectations and overwhelming problems?

> how can we inspire students to strive for excellence--to discover their own potential--in an era of reduced expectations and overwhelming problems?

It can be argued that the very existence of an educational institution implies a belief in the future, in possibilities for improvement. Teachers like Ralph Holloway who devote their lives to education must do so with the confidence that their efforts have value for others. Students, when asked why they have come to college, invariably reply that they wish to better their lives. Sometimes the ``betterment'' they have in mind is financial, but often students talk about the desire to develop their intellectual skills and to contribute to the solving of social problems. Our job as educators is to prepare students to fulfill these goals. By identifying "Discovery" as our college theme, we are addressing the heart of the educational process. All education is discovery in one way or another. Discovery is part of what makes us human.

> By identifying "Discovery" as our college theme, we are addressing the heart of the educational process.

A number of faculty have integrated the Discovery theme into their classes this semester (Dick Stoner's project described earlier in this edition is one example), but most faculty would agree that all courses focus on Discovery in one way or another. Whether the emphasis is on science, literature, medicine, art, technology, history or psychology, all curricula have an interest in human curiosity and creativity. The voyages of discovery in the 15th and 16th centuries serve, as Lorenz Firsching suggests, as metaphors for much larger voyages of the human mind.

During this quincentenniel year of Columbus's voyages of discovery we are deluged with books, articles, exhibitions, movies, lectures, television programs, musical compositions, and yes--even recipes exploring the impact of Christopher Columbus. A number of presentations dealing with "Discovery" have already taken place on campus. Those remaining are listed on page five.

This Issue

This issue was edited by ProfessorAnn Sova of theEnglish department. Ann has been a faculty member at BCC since 1971. This is the second time she has edited *Center Stage*.

Upcoming Issues

The November issue will be edited by Paul Chambers and devoted to the topic of Moral Reasoning. The December edition will focus on Classroom Assessment and will be edited by Eric Beamish and Linda Mapes. In February, Roberta Williams will edit an issue on Multiculturalism. The March issue will be devoted to Teaching Heros and edited by Claire Ligeikis-Clayton. Marilyn Akins will edit the April issue on Problem Solving . In addition to theses topics articles on the theme "Human Discovery" will be included throughout the year. If you would like to share your thoughts on one of these topic, please contact the appropriate editor.

Articles are usually 500 words, but may be longer or shorter. Electronic Copies of articles should be submitted to the Teaching Resource Center 1-2 months before publication. Please contact the Teaching Resource Center for instructions and assistance.

Send correspondence and contributions to the publications manager:

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Moral Reasoning, A College Goal

Paul A. Chambers, Humanities

Many ethical issues are reported in the media, from Savings and Loan scandals to falsification of scholarly research. The nation is very aware of ethical lapses and is hungry for ethical behavior from its citizens. This college approved the General Education program that includes a goal of moral reasoning for all students in every curricula.

Professor Kohlberg, a psychologist, investigated moral behavior; he found that the motivation for that behavior varied. The most basic motive was fear of punishment; the most sophisticated was based on logical reasoning, moral reasoning. This is the skill demanded of every graduate of Broome.

Moral reasoning is applying the reasoning process to moral situations. The reasoning process is the same one used with math, science, or the social sciences. The same critical thinking skills are used in all areas; the conclusion must be supported by evidence, premises. This point was made by Dr. Ruggiero, a speaker at the opening faculty meeting in January, 1991. The conclusion is murder is wrong; the premises to justify this may vary from God's

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Moral Reasoning or "I'll Huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your House Down"

Greg Saraceno, English

Moral reasoning--whether viewed in relation to General Education guidelines or in broader philosophical contexts--is the sort of concept which resists concrete definition. First of all, moral reasoning is an intellectual *process* as opposed to an ethical *result*. It is one of those philosophical realms better defined by articulating and analyzing significant problems and questions than by solving or answering them. Nevertheless, BCC has identified this intellectual process as a General Education objective. Of course, it is not unusual to specify a process (or skill) as a curricular objective. For example, a course in horseback riding would teach students how to "ride horses". Courses involving critical thinking, another intellectual *process* and General Education objective, strive to help students learn how to "think critically". Accordingly, moral reasoning courses must teach students how to "reason morally". Yet, this simple semantic inversion doesn't get us very far in defining moral reasoning as either an intellectual process or curricular objective.

Were we to agree that "to reason" is essentially to *think critically*, then it follows that "to reason morally" is to *think critically from some moral or ethical perspective*. But which moral perspective is the appropriate one? And upon which of our faculties do we rely in exercising moral principles? Immanuel Kant, perhaps the single most prominent philosopher in modern ethics, provides an answer: "…the will is a faculty of choosing only that which reason, independently of inclination, recognizes…as good." For Kant, morality is essentially a matter of pure reason--any determination as to what is "good" must work apart from personal "inclination" --emotional or otherwise. Therefore, moral reasoning is merely critical thinking applied to ethical issues or problems. This would suggest that moral reasoning is an intellectual refinement as teachable as any other critical thinking skill. On the other hand, some highly influential modern philosophers have argued that ethics (and any determination of a moral or righteous end) has little to do with "reason" or the rational intellect. David Hume, for example, argues that "Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions…" Hume concludes that morality is "more properly felt than judg'd of…" Therefore, sound

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Why I Teach

Brendan R. Flynn, Chemical Technology

When Paul Chambers asked me to write a brief essay on teaching, my first impulse was to say no, never volunteer. But how could I refuse Paul, my highly respected colleague, with whom I've been team teaching PHI 208, Humanities and Technology, for some six years?

In response to the question as to why I am a teacher rather than working in industry or at some other endeavor, I would say that teaching provides more diversity, is more stimulating and is much more fun than other activities. While industry is definitely more financially rewarding, it also lacks these other qualities. At BCC, each year brings new students with new ideas, attitudes, and questions. I've been told that the atmosphere at the start of each fall semester is similar to spring training.

We TEC division faculty have an advantage over others. We usually have the same students in lab and lecture. If the lecture format is more formal and less interactive, the small more intimate lab sessions provide many opportunities to develop rapport with the students. It may take a few weeks but eventually the teacher/student barriers begin to fall and each starts to see the other outside their usual role.

> It is fun watching students getting excited over making nylon, dying cloth, or competing to get the best yield in a complex synthesis project.

My discipline is chemistry, which is by nature a laboratory science. It is fun watching students getting excited over making nylon, dying cloth, or competing to get the best yield in a complex synthesis project. It is fascinating to observe how the student's lab skills and intuitive reasoning powers mature over a year's time. Every year a few students begin to understand the rules of the game and then ask what if we change this parameter or what if we try this approach? This I find quite rewarding.

Teaching at BCC also provides time to read and study, to keep current with my profession. The college also has the facilities to work on new demonstrations for our classes and to become proficient with new instrumentation. With all this, there is no time to be bored.

I have worked in industry and I would argue that hour for hour teaching is much more work. Daily activities in industry tend to be cyclical, with busy periods followed by slack times. In contrast, a college semester goes at full throttle for fifteen weeks with few breaks in the rhythm. This business is much more demanding, both of energy and of emotions.

> I have worked in industry and I would argue that hour for hour teaching is much more work.

Finally, each year brings in a new (captive) audience for some atrocious chemistry jokes, you don't have to work in the rain, and there is no heavy lifting.

Chambers (from page 1)

commandment to Mill's Utilitarianism. Because ethics is philosophical, there are a variety of theories that reasonable people can defend.

General Education is directed by a campus-wide committee; moral reasoning is directed by a subcommittee. The members of the subcommittee are: James Boyden, Ann Blakeslee, Paul Chambers, Brendan Flynn, Tricia Newland, Greg Saraceno, and Adam Younker.

To implement the moral reasoning goal the curriculum includes formal teaching of this skill. Phi 201 Ethics teaches basic ethical theories and applies these to contemporary moral issues. This course enrolls about 120 students each year. ENG 220 Communicating about Values teaches moral reasoning to the majority of students. In this course, literature about moral issues is read, discussed, and written about, so students examine the assumptions behind their moral decisions. Moral reasoning is also taught in social science courses for the students in the Technology Division who do not take ENG 220.

In addition to this curricular program, the faculty are urged to inject comments or units about moral reasoning in all courses. For example, when discussing the course outline at the beginning of the semester, the policy about make-up exams could include comments about the moral reasoning behind the policy. This is a matter of fairness, and that is a moral issue. If the instructor would use the term moral reasoning in the discussion, this person has helped the class toward this general education goal. During the semester as topics are discussed, comments or discussions about the moral implications of the issue can be a part of every course. Students must learn that all human behavior must be moral behavior. To assist faculty to incorporate moral reasoning in courses, the subcommittee has arranged for faculty workshops and other workshops are planned.

By stressing moral reasoning in its General Education, this college is responding to a need recognized by the nation. Many leading companies have initiated programs in ethics because they too recognize the same need the college does. Moral reasoning is a skill demanded of citizens.

Moral Philosophy and PHI 203 at BCC

George Higginbottom, Liberal and General Studies

Educational concerns touch on a great many academic disciplines and policy domains. Economics, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and, of course, politics, each provide unique perspectives on educational problems, illuminating diverse aspects of the enterprise.

The academic field of education has its own conceptual distinctions which enable scholars to specialize on what they regard as rationally divisible aspects of the whole. Thus curriculum specialists and teaching and learning theorists study discrete aspects of education in order more fully to understand and more effectively to guide practice.

> Moral philosophy, or ethics, arguably the most important of education's philosophical domains...

Philosophy, too, has a place in educational theory and practice. Whether concerned with questions of overall purpose, or with knowledge and truth claims, the several subfields of philosophy figure prominently in educational theorizing. Moral philosophy, or ethics, arguably the most important of education's philosophical domains, has an ancient heritage in efforts by thinkers to define the good for mankind through which formulation curriculum and instruction might subsequently be organized. If Plato's Socrates sought the idea of justice as a foundational premise for the state, and Aristotle sought the good for man by first analyzing his nature, or soul, both were addressing issues in the realm of ethics with implications for education and schooling.

Unlike these ancients, educators and policy makers in contemporary America rarely present fully justified accounts of the human good when discussing schooling's aims, but implicit in familiar statements on goals and curriculum are beliefs about what constitute the good for America's youth and ultimately all of its citizens.

The course I teach, PHI 203, "Philosophical Issues in American Education", critically examines the clearly and less clearly stated goals of education in order to uncover assumptions about the human good lurking beneath public rhetoric. One curriculum, for example, suggests an intellectualist theory of the human good: the development of mind. Another counts the good in terms of occupational and economic competence: the capacity to find and be successful in a career. Yet another, a liberationist rationale, sees the good largely in terms of personal freedom: achieving the wherewithal to define one's own being in the world.

American education, like education and schooling everywhere, is culture-bound. Our social and cultural environment, because pluralistic, is rather amorphous and constantly undergoing change and redefinition. But even within its variety and fluidity, there is general agreement concerning the rightness of our democratic aspirations: our collective preference for a way of life characterized by equality before the law, "liberal" rights, self-government, popular participation, and freedom to pursue one's own good as one sees it.

Like all political theory, a branch of moral philosophy on Aristotle's view, democratic theorizing is also moral theorizing. The foundational premises of American education are eminently moral; arguments over curriculum, instruction, resource allocation, authority relations, power, and control all must be appraised in light of democracy's moral aspirations. Questions about what is right and what is fair, while not always apparent in conversations on education and schooling, especially where marketplace metaphors are used to frame issues, serve to alert us to the moral grounding of discourse on educational policy and practice. Thus, in PHI203 we are concerned with questions such as these: What constitutes equal educational opportunity? How are we fairly to allocate resources? What limits, if any, ought there to be on speech? What sort(s) of moral education can schools legitimately provide? What types of parental "choice" plans are compatible with fairness? What moral entailments govern teacher relations with students? How, optimally, can we balance individual rights with collective obligations?

In attempting, through reading, writing, and discourse, to reconcile educational practices with the moral ideals of democratic governance, prospective teachers and interested citizens develop philosophically informed views on contemporary educational issues and achieve skill and confidence in debating them. At least that is what PHI 203 proposes to do for students.

Blakeslee (from page 6)

education should be the teaching of informed decision-making which recognizes there is a moral and ethical component to life."

In conclusion, the approach to teaching ethics described in this presentation is problem-oriented. It is designed to meet the needs of a wide variety of students but seeks to ensure that awareness exists to the fact that value judgments are woven into all decisions -- whether business, technology, health-related, etc. This association -- combining the moral decision-making and the technical decision-making to arrive at judgment -- MORAL REASONING, as we are coming to know it -- must be part of the community college experience.

AN OPINION

TEACHING ETHICS AT THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE: WHY & HOW?

by Anne Blakeslee

WHY DOES THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE NEED TO TEACH VALUES/ETHICS?

Consider the following quotes:

> "Millions of . . . people are moving through the educational sausage grinder who have never once been encouraged to question their own values, or to make them explicit. In the face of a rapidly shifting, choice-filled environment . . . this neglect is crippling." (Alvin Toffler)

> "In recent years the school systems of this nation have produced too many graduates for whom cleverness is more important than character, income more important than integrity . . . American education has become too neutral in its approach . . ." (Emlyn I. Griffith)

> "medical decisions are made in the face of ignorance, ambiguity and perplexity . . . these are inescapable features of medical decision-making . . . Advances in medical treatments have promoted the emphasis of science and neglected humanity." (Dr. William G. Bartholme)

The fact of the matter is -- what is "right" and "proper" and "just" are important terms and are certainly important questions for every person in every profession. The problem is -- they will not be more easily identified (or answered) in the future. Clearly, we can expect them to become even more important as our society becomes more crowded, our economy more competitive, and our technology more complex.

As America moves through the technology era, our economy is experiencing a switch from production of goods to production of services. This trend means the emphasis will be on people, rather than things, and calls attention to the need for educational programs to deal with the rights and duties of citizens in a free society. Clearly, this means programs which deal with ethics and morality in one person's relations with other people, in one group's relations with other groups, etc.

For those who think the job of teaching values should be left to our homes and churches, let me say -- I agree. But, the fact of the matter is there are a great number of young people who, for whatever reason, are neither finding their queries answered nor being encouraged to pursue thoughtful consideration of their values through these modes. The answer, as unfortunate as it may seem, is that since values education is an overriding societal need today -- it deserves priority in our schools at all levels.

The community college student is of particular concern here and if one thinks about his/her make-up, there should be little opposition to the idea of including ethics in every community college student's curricula.

The community college student's make-up will not be addressed in detail but literature generally agrees that many of our students may have been failed in some way by the educational system in the past or may not have participated fully in it. Therefore, even if their primary and secondary education included discussing and understanding of commonly accepted principles that are fundamental to life in a self-governing community, responsibilities of citizenship, etc. -- our student may not have connected them with his/her life. Too, these students may be entering a career in a relatively short period of time -- they must be prepared for the challenge. In fact, this preparation also is generally a stated goal of most community colleges.

HOW ARE BASIC VALUES/ETHICS TAUGHT?

Three of the most commonly accepted approaches to moral education are:

- values clarification
- situation ethics
- critical issues

These approaches supplement the old-style moral instruction, which emphasized absolute moral rules as definitive and without exception.

William Hare, Professor of Education and Philosophy at Dalhousie University, summarizes these approaches as follows:

"**Values clarification** essentially seeks to prevent the values of other people being imposed. Moralizing and propaganda are firmly rejected.

Situation ethics abandons the notion of hard and fast rules in morality, and attempts to determine what one ought to do in particular situations bearing in mind that circumstances alter cases.

Critical issues challenge the view that morality is commonsense, clear-cut and obvious, and this approach encourages the idea that morality is controversial and problematic, requiring hard thinking."

Clearly, each of these methods addresses the problem of moral indoctrination of students. However, Professor

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Blakeslee (from page 4)

Hare is not alone in his belief that they fall short of the ideal means of promoting "open-mindedness". To me, it is imperative that a goal of higher education should be to promote such open-mindedness. The students need to be able to make up their own minds about moral issues based on a consideration of evidence and argument, and should be prepared to revise their thinking if confronted with relevant objections and difficulties.

A new look at moral indoctrination of students at all levels is needed but it will be the focus of this discussion to address moral indoctrination of the community college student specifically.

Too often, we teach ethics as though it were separate from the technical considerations of a chosen career. Because the community college student may well be entering his or her chosen career in the very near future -- it is imperative that a goal of every community college be to address ethics applications.

HOW SHOULD VALUES/ETHICS BE TAUGHT?

Ethics is not a new topic within the two-year academic arena. It is, however, an area that educators and curriculum committees have been hesitant to allot time for in an already crowded curriculum. Often, there is a perception that the discipline is soft and non-verbiate when contrasted to more technical subjects. Another problem is the fact that ethics rarely offers specific solutions for discrete problems and tends to raise questions rather than provide clear answers.

However, there are many legitimate ways of teaching such values as integrity, respect, personal and professional responsibility, due process, work ethics, etc. There are effective ways of motivating students to understand the relationship between order and freedom, obligation and privilege, unity and diversity -- the classic opposites which every society struggles to reconcile. I clearly believe this reconciliation process must be encouraged in elementary, secondary, and higher education.

there are many legitimate ways of teaching such values as integrity, respect, personal and professional responsibility, due process, work ethics, etc.

The community college has an important role to play in this process. Aside from meeting quality education goals, etc. the community college will have to respond to questions of ethics neglect if they are to keep public confidence and ensure adequate funding.

Every school needs a process for teaching and discussing values. However, the community college plays an important role in this process since it may well be the student's last chance to go through the role-play process before entering their new roles as "adults". The community college's older non-traditional student also will benefit by way of the discussion and thinking more about his or her decisions as they have been or will be made.

The community college can ill-afford to neglect this important part of the student's education -- whether through a specific ethics course or integration into all courses or most appropriately through a combination of methods.

However, with the advances in technology and the expansion of our knowledge in all program areas as a result of increased research, communication modes, passage of time, etc., it is not surprising that in many areas it is harder to cover all the desired material than previously.

It is also not surprising that professors throughout academia are finding themselves concerned with finding the time to impart the knowledge their students need to be technically prepared for their future job situations.

The method I would like to propose is that community colleges consider using an interdisciplinary, applied ethics course. This course -- by way of specific applications to the student's career field -- would help alleviate this over-load problem. This is, obviously, not meant to replace the instructor's classroom discussion of ethics but to supplement it. The idea is that teachers of this ethics course would impart knowledge that can be applied to problems that the students will face as they progress through their careers. Because moral considerations are as much a part of the decisions these students will be facing in their professions as the technical considerations, this teaching must be accomplished. To accomplish this end, the use of real cases in which ethical considerations can be shown to make a critical difference would be used.

Both knowledge and application are necessary. Without the core of knowledge, the learner must derive answers either intuitively or through conditioned reflex until the core -- often incomplete and fragmented -- is painfully derived by a sort of backward reasoning. However, the core alone, taught in lectures and classrooms, remains meaningless until it is applied.

Academia often promotes a focus on the memorization of an array of facts rather than through the understanding of broad concepts. An Association of American Colleges' three-year study noted that "90 percent of all colleges teach the same skills over and over . . . note taking and memorization." This limited focus may tend to form a "conceptual ghetto" in which only one viewpoint exists.

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It has also been suggested that since ethics in a pluralist society relates its practice to a multitude of anthropological, historical, and religious considerations, a study of ethics can serve to reverse the student's tendency to study facts and to perform rote memorization.

Clearly, studying and applying ethics draws upon the arts and literature, disciplines that reflect life in a different way than the business, technologies and health fields often do. In addition to teaching ethics so that students will consider ethical issues and be able to make ethical judgments in their career endeavors, the community college should also teach ethics to reaffirm the student's connection to the non-career oriented or academic world. In doing this, the teaching serves to foster sensitivity and humanity.

Further, by using an interdisciplinary approach, the dynamic relationship between knowledge and its application stimulates further inquiry and is mutually beneficial.

For example, the focus might be on the academic disciplines of nursing and health sciences, business and office technologies, technical and trade areas and liberal arts here at BCC. However, there is clear implication that this course is well-suited for adaptation to meet the varying academic disciplines of all community colleges.

This interdisciplinary approach also will act to encourage interaction among students and faculty of divisions and/or departments outside their own. It will offer a multi-dimensional communication and integration approach to the community college experience.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT???

Teaching ethics is part of teaching a business, technology, health science, or even general or liberal arts program, etc. Ethics shares with these disciplines the necessity of providing information, analytical skills, and an opportunity to put this knowledge and these skills to use.

The education of teachers in these interdisciplinary areas will vary. Teachers for this course should be persons respected by the students and identified as familiar with the student's particular areas of interest.

The teacher's credibility is easily lost if the students sense the teacher's lack of familiarity with their ethical problems and areas of interest. This does not mean to imply that the teacher of a nursing student must be a nurse, a business major's teacher be from the business department, etc. Rather, whoever teaches must be familiar with moral argument and with the problem at hand. In this light, team-teaching may serve well.

The course could begin with a series of brief lectures giving an overview of ethical theory and complementing reading assignments. An exam would be given to ensure the student's understanding of the reasoning process, etc.

Students could then be divided into groups which will meet formally once a week for the rest of the semester. Each student would join one of the several panels dealing with a broad area of topics. The topics will be determined by a survey of students' academic programs, career and personal interests. A faculty member with the appropriate background and interest would be assigned the group.

The students as a whole could have one lecture weekly which would tie areas together and allow an interdisciplinary sharing of ethical thought.

The student could be expected to write a research paper on one aspect of the broad topic of the panel, and to present it to the group and its faculty leader. The paper and its oral presentation would form part of the students grade. Since BCC has designated every student must complete two courses with a writing emphasis as part of their mission to meet general education requirements -- this course would also serve to accomplish this tangential goal.

For a variety of unexamined reasons, the assumption has been made that students have already mastered the skills of analytical thinking, solving problems, and making decisions by the time they enter college. Assuming the students have these basic skills already in hand, it is natural to conclude that they will profit most from the case study approach to ethics -- since this approach allows them to apply their assumed skills directly to practical situations.

Not meaning to offend students and without having any scientific research to back me up, let me say the above assumption is faulty for some community college students.

Therefore, because the weakness of student skills in problem analysis and decision making is anticipated -- a focal point of the course could be on using a variety of decision-making exercises with case studies as raw material. This use of newly structured, decision-making exercises would require the student to go through a step-by-step thinking process and an unfamiliar form of education. Further, students would be expected to use this approach for their final paper and presentation.

The importance of decision-making process can be noted by referring again to the report by the Association of American Colleges.

"We need to shift our emphasis from a narrow concern . . . to emphasis on process. The key goal of

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East Germany: An Apparition of Past, Present, and Future

Ernie Giordani, English

Since the end of World War II and occupation of Germany by the allied forces of the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union, the former German capital, Berlin, located in what was until recently East Germany, mirrored the four-part division of Germany. For according to the "London Protocol" of 1944, each of the four victorious powers governed a portion of Berlin, thus forming an island in the Soviet occupation zone. Of course, with the advent of the "Cold War," East Germany slid behind the "Iron Curtain," often to be heard of in relation to the "The Wall," and the periodic escape attempts to the West by East German citizens. But that was the past, and now there is one Germany and one Berlin -- almost.

From October 3 through October 10, 1992, I and twenty other community college faculty and staff from around the county participated in a seminar sponsored by the College Consortium for International Studies. Entitled "Berlin at the Crossroads of History, Geopolitics and Economics" the seminar was conducted primarily in East Berlin.

During this week-long series of lectures and discussions about East German economics and culture, we visited work places to talk and eat with East German workers, examined portions of the Pergamon Museum with its unbelievably rich vast collection of ancient artifacts, and talked to faculty and students at Humboldt University, where we had interesting exchanges on the nature of academic freedom in post-war and present-day East Germany.

However, the glamour and glimmer of technologically advanced West Berlin contrasted with the dullness of emerging East Berlin. The president of Simmons, a factory which produces gears and special machines crucial to the manufacture of machines, explained that in the socialistic, planned society the notion of productivity was not strongly related to individual reward. The lone worker had little incentive to break from the group and produce more at a faster pace. In short, the new East German workers needed retraining in order to learn how to compete more effectively in the new global work place. Furthermore, signs of German industriousness, so apparent in the West, were manifest in the East through ambitious construction and renovation projects.

Complicating the problem of integrating the East German work force into a unified Germany is the continued influx of foreign workers into both East and West Germany. Although the German economy is strong, these particular workers have special needs as regards German language acquisition as well as acculturation.

In addition, attending the glorious opera house (Schauspielhaus), going to the Brandenburg Gate, seeing and getting a piece of The Wall, walking through the zoo, using the U Bahn, eating in small East German Gasthaeuser, visiting the resting places of Berthold Brecht, Anna Saegers, and Josef Becher, three important twentieth century East German writers, as well as Heinrich Mann, and enjoying the conviviality of an East Germany belonging partly to the 1940's and 50's before it disappears, all contributed to an enriching professional development experience full of discovery at every turn.

Saraceno (from page 1)

moral judgments must involve application of the emotions to the ethical dilemma. Though this does not necessarily preclude the idea of moral reasoning as a "teachable" process or skill, it does suggest that morality is personal and subjective, placing ethical theory in a very different philosophic and academic realm from critical thinking.

This central controversy involves the theoretical bases and essential methods of the moral reasoning process. Which is it--personal and subjective or rational and objective? To decide, one feels compelled to introspection--to examine one's own moral foundation--to examine one's own sense of right and wrong and the process by which one applies one's moral notions. But Samuel Butler warns his readers of the serious risks of such ethical undertaking: "The foundations of morality are like all other foundations: if you dig too much about them the superstructure will come tumbling down." Doesn't this mean that to engage students in ethical analysis will likely deprive them of whatever moral underpinnings brought them into the classroom? If students are to suffer the collapse of their ethical "superstructure"--if the conscientious student of moral reasoning is to be rewarded with a clunk on the head--shouldn't we leave well enough alone...?

Then again, a clunk on the head is sometimes good for the soul. If we never lose our ethical house of sticks, we will never build our house of bricks. Should one assume, then, that the instructor in the moral reasoning classroom is a sort of professorial big, bad wolf? Perhaps, but a special kind of "villain". As Butler suggests, ethical introspection and investigation is a serious and difficult business. To engage students in moral reasoning is to walk the razor's edge requiring pedagogical sensitivity and intelligence. Though Socrates may have been guilty of overstatement, the ``examined'' life does have its advantages. Teaching moral reasoning is the business of helping students identify and clarify their values. As such, it is a very worthwhile and legitimate academic venture that encourages us to better understand ourselves and others. It marks the point at which education becomes, not the teacher's, but the student's domain--where education may evolve from training to enlightenment.

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Why Do I Teach

J. Patricia Lee, Nursing

When I was trying to select what career I wanted to follow in high school, my counselor asked me what I had decided. Nursing and teaching were both of interest to me. But since there was no Community College or State University College in our area at the time of my graduation from Binghamton North High School, I decided I would go to nursing school for economic reasons. One day in my last semester, the counselor called me to her office and said Keuka College had received a Federal grant to start a Bachelor of Science program in nursing and was searching for 32 good students throughout the state and New Jersey to award scholarships to. In this program, she told me, I could do both nursing and eventually teaching of nursing. Having been accepted in this pilot program, I found it fascinating. Keuka's nursing students affiliated in every size hospital from the small town ones in the Finger Lakes area to both a city and state hospital. Then as a senior nursing student I was a Cadet Nurse in the United States Naval Hospital in Chelsea, Massachusetts the last six months of this accelerated program. The Keuka program emphasized that nurses were also teachers. A large part of nursing is teaching patients how to take care of themselves, how to stay healthy and prevent coming back to the hospital. Not only were we teachers to our patients, but also to others in the community.

Hospital nursing was my profession as a young graduate, and part-time, private duty was as a young mother. When my youngest son was in Junior High I was offered a position as Health Education teacher at Binghamton North High School. When I told my children, they said, "Ugh, not a teacher, not you, you're a nurse!" They did not care for their teachers and considered their teachers boring. I did accept the position and taught there for three years. It was a challenge to make Health Education interesting and many did tell me they really looked forward to coming to class to see what I'd come up with next. Many of them did stay healthy and one even teaches at Broome - John Butchko.

> ... the best of two worlds, teaching and helping with the care of the patients.

Teaching Health Education was interesting, but I did miss caring for the patients in the hospitals. In 1968 I was offered a position to teach at Broome Community College in their new Associate Degree Program. That would be the best of two worlds, teaching and helping with the care of the patients. People in the community told us we could never educate a good nurse in a two year program. The majority of the nurses in our community were three year graduates of a hospital based nursing program. With a well organized, well planned curriculum, new teaching machines, computer assisted learning and extensive practice lab we proved them wrong. Broome nursing graduates are head nurses, supervisors of two of the local operating suites, nurse mid-wives, nurse practitioners, and Broome nursing faculty. It has been a great pleasure to see how well they have done.

When I was asked why I teach, it reminded me of this little saying that probably says why I do. "To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you lived. This is to have succeeded." (author unknown)

This Issue

This issue was edited by Professor Paul Chambers of the Humanities department. Paul has been a faculty member at BCC since 1963 and is the chairperson for General Education Moral Reasoning Committee.

Upcoming Issues

The December issue will be edited by Eric Beamish and Linda Mapes and devoted to the topic of Classroom Assessment. In February, Roberta Williams will edit an issue on Multiculturalism. The March issue will be devoted to Teaching Heros and edited by Claire Ligeikis-Clayton. Marilyn Akins will edit the April issue on Problem Solving. In addition to theses topics, articles on "Why I Teach: and our Campus Theme for 92-93 -"Human Discovery" will be included throughout the year. If you would like to share your thoughts on one of these topic, please contact the appropriate editor.

Articles are usually 500 words, but may be longer or shorter. Electronic Copies of articles should be submitted to the Teaching Resource Center 1-2 months before publication. Please contact the Teaching Resource Center for instructions and assistance.

Send correspondence and contributions to the publications manager:

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Center Stage

A Platform for the Discussion of Teaching/Learning Ideas
Broome Community College – Binghamton, New York 13902

Volume 3 Number 3 *December 15, 1992*

In this issue of *Center Stage* five faculty members - Mary Dixon, Pat Durfee, Ben Kasper, Dan Dodway, and Greg Saraceno provide some very special personal perspectives on assessment related to their specific areas of content and teaching expertise. Dean Reilly describes the very considerable progress made by the Business Division under the leadership of Mid Semple in developing program based pre- and post-tests, an example of assessment in the academic majors. Wanda Johnston introduces her vision for the future Learning Resource Center, much of it based on input gleaned from the extensive assessment she conducted among student and staff users during her first months at BCC. Finally, Bryan Blanchard presents a brief overview of the national assessment movement relating BCC's progress in implementing its indigenous program to the global purview.

Enjoy the issue.
- Eric Beamish and Linda Mapes, Editors

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Outcomes Assessment: Process and Progress

Eric Beamish, Institutional Research

Over time, assessment in higher education has referred to many different and wide-ranging processes and procedures. These multiple uses of the term have often bewildered and alienated members of the academic community more than they have enlightened and engaged them. It has, at times, referred exclusively to measurement of the entering academic capabilities of students. At others, it has meant the measurement of student attainment, of curriculum strength, or of faculty or administrative competency. In its generally accepted contemporary use, however, assessment refers to the examination and study of learning outcomes to better inform students, faculty and administrators about the accomplishments of the educational process and to suggest ways to improve and enhance them. In this sense, assessment is clearly central to the concern of all members of the academic community since the constant improvement of student accomplishment is, from every professional perspective, pivotal to its mission.

> ...assessment refers to the examination and study of learning outcomes to better inform students, faculty and administrators about the accomplishments of the educational process and to suggest ways to improve and enhance them.

Although everyone in the academic community has a role to play in assessment, without the widespread involvement of faculty the ingredient most essential to its success will be missing. In fact, assessment that is mandated and externally imposed on faculty, whether from inside or outside the institution, is ultimately doomed to failure. Only assessment that is led by and fully participated in by faculty can succeed in truly benefiting the principals who constitute academia - the student and the teacher. As Joseph Burke, SUNY Provost, has stated it, "Though sponsorship and support from administrators and cooperation by students is important to assessment, faculty commitment is essential to success. Faculty teach the classes, mentor the students, and design the curricula for undergraduate majors and general education. Assessment can never work unless faculty assume ownership and responsibility for its direction, design and use."

(Continued on page 2)

Beamish (from page 1)

> Only assessment that is led by and fully participated in by faculty can succeed in truly benefiting the principals who constitute academia - the student and the teacher.

The centrality of the faculty in designing and managing the assessment process should not be used, however, to exclude or release others from assuming key responsibilities in its formulation and support. According to most authorities, administration has a major leadership role to play, albeit a very different one from faculty. Setting the process in motion initially; establishing assessment as a major institutional priority; providing continuing encouragement, moral support and financial resources; and setting possible limits attainable within institutional planning priorities are among key elements often cited as administrative contributions essential to assessment success. Planning and research personnel are equally indispensable constituent members of any assessment team. However, their role is one of advising, consulting and service rather than of leading. Student services likewise should be integrally involved since many of the outcomes measured by a comprehensive assessment plan relate to goals which are, in the strictest sense, non-academic. Student personal growth and development nourished by such functions as counseling, career exploration, and participation in extracurricular activities are equally significant benefits of higher education's collective effort.

Essential as the contributions of all non-faculty entities are, however, their endeavors are fundamentally extensions and enrichments of the learning activity whose goals are set by faculty and promulgated through the curriculum which they design, develop and implement. Richard J. Light, director of the Harvard Assessment Seminars, has this to say about the role of faculty in assessment, "It is for them to shape - if not to carry out - these inquiries themselves. Faculty ownership dramatically increases the probability that any findings will actually be implemented. When a president or dean simply says, 'We must do this,' it becomes much less attractive for a faculty member to participate."

> ...if faculty are to assume the primary responsibility for assessment they must control the development of appropriate measures to determine whether learning goals are being achieved.

It is widely accepted that if faculty are to assume the primary responsibility for assessment they must control the development of appropriate measures to determine whether learning goals are being achieved. As well, they must determine the techniques used to assure that the results of assessment are being fully and correctly employed to improve teaching and learning. Many advocates of assessment believe that, when properly designed and implemented, it both eases the tasks and enhances the successes of teaching in such measure that the results constitute their own reward. Other authorities believe, at least in the early stages of involvement, that significant faculty participation should be acknowledged through the institutional reward structure. Whatever the source of satisfaction, there is universal agreement that faculty who have fully and genuinely entered into a comprehensive campus-wide assessment effort find that growth of program quality and demonstrable improvement in learning inevitably result.

> ...what information can we gather so that we can be more effective teachers and help students to be more effective students next week, next month, next year? How can we do our jobs better?

What should the ideal assessment program address and what should it look like structurally? Professor Light's response when asked what topics assessment should address was as follows, "The basic principle is this, what information can we gather so that we can be more effective teachers and help students to be more effective students next week, next month, next year? How can we do our jobs better?" Russell Edgerton in his 1990 editorial for *Change* points out that, "...assessment, properly understood, isn't about tests and other modes of measurement. It's about what's behind these. It's a mindset that asks questions - good questions, hard questions, *legitimate* questions - about what and how much our students are learning. As stated by Rossmann and El-Khawass, "The key purposes of assessment are to ask important questions about student learning, to get some meaningful information on these questions, and to use the information for academic improvement."

Such expressions of intent, though both insightful and authentic, must inevitably be translated into a plan having a specific form and doable steps. With this as his unenviable task Provost Burke devised the following set of guidelines to help SUNY institutions begin formulating their individual assessment plans,

1. Campus plans for evaluating undergraduate education should reflect the mission of each institution and the diversity of its programs goals. Given the complexity of the goals of undergraduate education, campuses should use multiple indicators of student achievement, Assessment reports should indicate both the absolute levels of performance and the relative trends over time.

2. Campus plans, where possible and appropriate,

(Continued on page 10)

An Introduction to Portfolio Assessment of Writing

Mary Dickson and Pat Durfee, English

Using portfolios to assess students' writing is neither a new nor a rarefied practice; in fact, over the last two decades increasing numbers of instructors have explored portfolio assessment, employing it in different ways and for different purposes. In colleges and universities across the country, portfolios may serve to determine students' grades in a course or to help their instructor decide if they may exit from that course and enter into others. Alternatively, portfolios may follow students throughout their academic career and factor into their eligibility for graduation. Portfolios may also function as catalysts for change by providing insights into writing and other programs.

In colleges and universities across the country, portfolios may serve to determine students' grades in a course...

Like artists' portfolios, the portfolios compiled by student writers present a body of work. They consist, generally, of a set of papers representing several kinds of writing or several writing tasks. In their portfolios, then, students may demonstrate to their instructor the various competencies that they have developed over a period of time. Portfolios that include all of the writing that a student has done to produce a final draft reveal much more, allowing the instructor to observe the ebb and flow of the student's thought and feeling and the process by which the student has composed. For the students, the portfolio is the record of a personal journey and a testament to gain and growth. It is also a display of their accomplishments.

Here at Broome Community College, the English Department and the General Education Steering Committee have expressed interest in using, respectively, course and career portfolios. Portfolio assessment might best be described, however, by looking at its use by a number of BCC English faculty. These instructors determine what writing is included in the portfolio; some of them ask students to select their best work for the portfolio. In most cases, the instructors grade the portfolio and not the individual papers in it. They do, though, read and respond to each paper, offering the student guidance in revising it for a mid-term or end-of-the-semester portfolio evaluation. Actually, they intervene often in the writing process and require students to place in the portfolio prewriting and drafts as well as final product. Thus their role is primarily that of mentor or, perhaps, experienced reader. They do not cast themselves as final authority; instead, their purpose is to provide one audience to which the students might write. In evaluating the students' work as a whole, the instructors apply published criteria that they have carefully explained to the students or even developed in cooperation with them.

More important to students even than the responses they receive from their instructors or from their peers is their own critical analysis of their drafts, which gives them a deeper, richer understanding of their writing. The BCC instructors therefore sometimes ask students to provide a narrative of the process of writing one or more of their papers, describing and explaining their revisions. They may also request a cover letter. In this letter students direct the instructor's reading of the portfolio and reflect on their writing experience. These self-monitoring and self-evaluating activities work to empower students by giving them responsibility for and ownership of their work.

While the benefits of portfolio assessment for instructors and students have been realized at BCC and at other institutions, obstacles to its use have also emerged. One concern frequently voiced by instructors is that they will not have enough time at the middle and at the end of the semester to review portfolios. But the reading of portfolios generally does not prove to be burdensome. The instructor is already well acquainted with much of the material, having read and responded to it before. In addition, the students have evaluated their work, making use of the same criteria the instructor will apply. Considerations such as making time to read and evaluate portfolios become more momentous, certainly, when course portfolios are read by groups of readers, as is sometimes the case, or when the portfolios represent the students' writing career. Faculty commitment to portfolio assessment and administrative support of it are thus crucial to its successful implementation.

One concern frequently voiced by instructors is that they will not have enough time at the middle and at the end of the semester to review portfolios.

The concerns of students as well as faculty must be thoughtfully addressed. Students accustomed to receiving a grade on every paper may be apprehensive about its omission; students may also be unclear about the criteria used to evaluate the portfolio and how it figures into their success or failure in the course. Instructors need to allow time to explain the rationale behind portfolio assessment, the criteria used to evaluate portfolios, and the place of portfolios in the course and in the curriculum.

The concerns about portfolios should not, though, obscure their value. They suggest to students, first, that writing is important. Second, by stressing revision, they imply that good writers are not born; rather, writers become good by practicing their craft. Thus portfolios encourage students who aspire to write well. Third, they assert that student writers, like professional writers, earn their reputation by the body of their work. Recognizing that they will not fail because of one misstep, students become willing to

(Continued on page 6)

Ruminations on Assessment

Ben Kasper, Social Sciences

The headlines are familiar and all too frequent. In an 87-question survey by the National Endowment for the Humanities only 58% of the college seniors knew that the Civil War was fought between 1850 and 1990; 58% couldn't identify Plato as the author of *The Republic*; 44% didn't know that Herman Melville wrote *Moby Dick*; and 23% incorrectly said Karl Marx's phrase "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need" appears in the U.S. Constitution. Over the past decade we have witnessed declining SAT scores, international comparisons which place American students close to the bottom, reports like "A Nation at Risk," and anecdotal evidence about the declining quality of American education. These are troubling indictments for educators and educational institutions.

As teachers one of our major responsibilities is to evaluate the mastery of course content. Our tests, writing assignments, and final grades are indicators of what the student has learned, assuming of course, that our exams are valid and reliable. Graduate education prepares us to teach our discipline, but neglects the need to evaluate or assess what happens in the classroom. How do we explain the discrepancy between what happens in the classroom and the accumulating evidence about an educational crisis?

...assessment should not be punitive, but rather a tool to motivate and foster the learning process.

I would like to suggest that we have contending approaches rather than a consensus when it comes to assessment. Is the mission of the community college to expedite the "cooling out" process? Do we have some responsibility to deflate the lofty aspirations of some students? On the other hand, some of us may have a testing philosophy which may be influenced by our desire to have positive student evaluations. Additional pressures originate with our concern about excessive rates of attrition and various attempts to increase the retention rate. In contrast, we might believe that assessment should not be punitive, but rather a tool to motivate and foster the learning process.

Finally, there is a host of questions about what to test and what type of exam to use: multiple-choice exams vs essay questions. Can our course make a significant and lasting impact on our students? Do we expect them to memorize theories, concepts or facts and reward them accordingly? The National Science Foundation concluded in a recent study that standardized tests may hurt education. "Most math and science experts now agree that rather than memorizing mathematical formulas or scientific terms, students must learn how to think like mathematicians and

(Continued on page 6)

Filling In The Shadows

Dan Dodway, Mathematics

Assessment takes a variety of forms and serves many purposes. For example, tests as instruments of assessment are ubiquitous, useful, and easy to administer. However, their excessive use can lead to complacency based on the assumption that they accomplish all our assessment objectives. Even if a test is perfectly reliable and valid with readable and unambiguous questions, the most that can be accomplished is to distinguish between areas of student mastery and weakness. Frequently, not even this is possible because the right answer may be selected for the wrong reason, giving the illusion of mastery.

Often these "lucky guesses" are based on rules that the students have discovered which work often enough to reinforce the rule into a tenacious misconception. Misconceptions are deep rooted and must be confronted to motivate change. One way of doing this is to provide many examples where it can be observed that the "wrong" rule won't work. A good test will provide questions which require a true understanding of the material in order to obtain a correct answer.

... our task is two-fold: first, determine areas of weakness about which the students are unaware, and second, provide opportunities for them to confront their misconceptions with illustrations that contradict their beliefs.

But locating deficiencies is not sufficient to assure improvement. Identification of the problem is only half the battle. When students are inappropriately confident, there is no incentive to change. Thus, our task is two-fold: first, determine areas of weakness about which the students are unaware, and second, provide opportunities for them to confront their misconceptions with illustrations that contradict their beliefs.

This relates to a medical paradigm such as administering an eye examination. Proper diagnosis depends on the practitioner's ability to differentiate between a patient's chance correct response and his or her actual ability to see the chart. The degree of confidence expressed in one's answer, as well as having several correct responses at the same level of difficulty, yield sufficient indicators to suggest the right prescription.

Considering confidence in answers adds another dimension to our assessment of students. It helps to pinpoint mismatches between what they think they know and what they actually know.

Also, asking them to judge how sure they are that they

(Continued on page10)

Communicating About Values: Student Response

Gregory Saraceno, English

ENG-220: *Communicating about Values* is an integral part of General Education at BCC. The course was conceived to serve two important General Education objectives--Effective Communication and Moral Reasoning. However, any curriculum involving communication and reasoning skills must also teach Critical Thinking. In addition, the course was intended to provide a forum for student discussion of various moral issues and problems. As such, it seemed appropriate that these ethical concerns be addressed from diverse Global/Cross-Cultural Perspectives. Thus, as it has evolved, the course serves at least four goals of the BCC General Education program.

> ...any curriculum involving communication and reasoning skills must also teach Critical Thinking.

After teaching *Communicating about Values* for a semester or two, it occurred to me that an interesting, informative and obvious way of assessing the extent to which the course was meeting prescribed objectives would be to ask the students. To this end, I developed a questionnaire which students complete near the end of the semester. Though I have no training and little experience in developing assessment tools, it seemed to me important that the questions be open-ended and simply worded so as not to lead the students into telling me what I wanted to hear. I think I succeeded but will let you judge for yourselves. I briefly paraphrase the conceptual description of the four objectives specified above as documented in Coherence and Purpose: General Education at Broome Community College that you may better appreciate the significance of the student comments which follow:

Effective Communication--the ability "to share your thoughts and feelings with others in speaking and writing, and as a consequence, influence their thinking."
Moral Reasoning--the process of distinguishing right from wrong and justifying one's decision.
Critical Thinking--"the capacity to think rationally...and to reach sound judgements about matters of personal or social importance."
Global/Cross-Cultural Perspective--awareness and tolerance "of the diversity of ideas and practices found in human societies around the world and in our nation."

Below, I have listed five questions from the questionnaire along with a compilation of (what seem to me) some of the most interesting and revealing student responses.

1. What did you learn about yourself and your values?

"I learned I should question things I believe in and try to understand why I feel that way."

"While still having much to learn, I have gained a lot of life experiences that are good in helping me form opinions about moral and ethical issues."

"That I have valid ideas which are by and large ethical and show responsibility and insight."

"I learned that I don't know as much as I thought I knew about my own ethics..."

"I began to realize that values...cannot be implied by actions, but must be thought about and established in advance of action."

2. What did you learn about others--other classmates as well as people from other cultures?

"All people and their ideas are important. If they have ideas that differ from mine that does not make either of us wrong but we can learn from each other."

"They too have important ideas, maybe different, but no less valid to them. And their points sometimes validate mine, sometimes become mine."

"I like to find out why people believe what they believe."

"I learned that the more diversified the people in a class such as this are, the more potential there is for learning."

"That other people's ethics are different than I would have expected after talking to them on a superficial level."

"I learned that we all (the whole world) have a lot in common. We are not as different as we try to make ourselves out to be."

3. What do you think you will do with what you learned?

"I think I am more patient and understanding with those who do not share my values."

"...it will make me a more effective writer..."

"Be more open to other peoples' ideas. Perhaps it won't change my mind but I will be more willing to hear them and really listen to what they think."

(Continued on page 6)

Saraceno (from page 5)

"Act more on my ethical beliefs, rather than store them."

"I think that lately I am more critical and analytical of what I read and hear. So I think I am applying the stuff already."

"Hopefully, I'll go with my feelings and do something about the issues I believe in or I'm against. Instead of just thinking about them or complaining about them, I'll do something about it."

4. What was the best thing about the course?

"The subject matter--it was pertinent to our immediate life and is something that most classes...avoid because it involves personal experience."

"...it encouraged me to read more effectively and get more out of what I read. I never realized how shallow my reading skills were."

"It taught me to not be afraid about sharing my beliefs whether religious, political, or ethical. This is something that has always been difficult for me and it taught me really how much I do and don't know about what I believe."

"Becoming aware of and discussing the views and experiences of others. I found that reading from the text allowed me to become a more competent and confident writer."

"Becoming more comfortable in discussing my ideas with others in my peer group. This included some much younger people and it was refreshing to hear their ideas."

"The course gave me a chance to speak openly with my own thoughts, feelings, beliefs, etc. The course also gave me a chance to enhance my writing skills."

"It made me really think."

5. Has taking the course changed you in any important ways?

"It has made me start listening to that little voice in the back of my head that says to start doing things--making a difference."

"Now when I make a decision or am asked my viewpoint on an issue I will critically, morally, and ethically evaluate the issue before answering."

"I have learned to be more open to other people's opinions...One's values vary from person to person, country to country, nationality to nationality, and who's to say whose are more valid?''

"About the only one so far is as a reminder to be more open to the world and myself if I really wish to learn. Who knows the effect on the future?"

Certainly, you will draw you own conclusions as to the significance of these anecdotal responses. To me, they suggest that the course is a significant intellectual experience for many students and is accomplishing profound academic objectives.

Dickson/Durfee (from page 3)

take those risks necessary for them to evolve as writers. Finally, in representing the student writers' best work, portfolios inspire that work, encouraging persistent striving. Not surprising, then, is one recent refinement in using portfolios to assess writing. On some campuses now, portfolios are not merely read and evaluated; the best of the collective best work is lauded and the bearers of those exceptional portfolios are honored and awarded for what they have achieved.

Kasper (from page 4)

scientists by being able to solve problems, design their own experiments to test hypotheses and explain the reasoning behind an answer."

Should we emphasize writing skills, critical thinking skills or problem-solving? Why is it that some students retain so little from one semester to the next? There are obviously more questions than answers. It might be useful and productive to initiate a college-wide dialogue about the philosophy and methodology of assessment. In some respects, we have begun a few tentative steps in this direction, but clearly we need to extend the dialogue.

We might want to consider a senior project or a senior thesis as a graduation requirement. The project or thesis would demonstrate proficiency in writing skills and statistical analysis or scientific literacy. The capstone project would require students to demonstrate a synthesis of courses. The senior project might also emphasize critical thinking skills.

The mission of the college is to equip students with the knowledge, skills and values to become productive members of the community. The challenge for BCC in the 1990's is more difficult and more critical than ever before.

Outcomes Assessment in the Business Department

Bill Reilly, Dean of Business

In the fall of 1991, the College's Outcomes Assessment Plan Steering Committee asked department chairs for a report of their progress in implementing the 1990-91 phase of the BCC Outcomes Assessment Plan and for any revisions in those plans for the following three to four years.

The Business Department had earlier reached consensus that it would assess outcomes by program and not by individual courses. The Department made a decision to use pre- and post-test instruments to measure outcomes, since the department faculty felt this was the most controllable and effective method of measuring student growth in the business portion of their programs.

In January 1992 a Business Department Assessment Committee was established to develop test instruments for each business program. The Committee included the following faculty: Mid Semple, Chair; Jim Abbott, Anne Blakeslee, Ray Van Ness, Glen Wood, and Adam Younker. The Assessment Committee met numerous times during the Spring 1992 semester to develop a pre-test instrument, with its goal to "pilot test" the instrument with the freshman experience students in Fall 1992. A post-test would be developed later which would be taken by students at graduation. The pre- and post-tests were both to be constructed in such a way that they reflected individual course objectives, the sum of which would be equivalent to the student's program objectives.

In January 1992 a Business Department Assessment Committee was established to develop test instruments for each business program.

Faculty from each program area were asked to submit test questions for each course they taught (approximately 2-3 questions for each course outline objective). The intent was that each "program exam" would consist of 90 questions. One of the committee's main tasks was to determine whether the submitted questions: (1) were representative of the body of knowledge and concepts which faculty felt the students should know when they graduated from BCC, (2) were of various levels of difficulty, and (3) met the test criteria.

The main objective of the pre-test is to determine the student's knowledge of the subject matter, as well as key terms and business concepts in each program area. The objective is not to assess the student's general reading comprehension skills or to determine the student's ability to interpret complex test question language. For ease of analysis, the test contains only multiple-choice questions.

The Business faculty's response to the Committee was heartening. The Committee accumulated well over a thousand test questions for nearly thirty courses taught in the Business Department, and the quality of the questions submitted was uniformly high. The Committee screened the questions to remove duplicates and to "winnow" them down to a workable number of items for each program's test bank, which was then computerized. The committee members reviewed the test questions and sent them back to the faculty for consensus agreement on overlap, deletions, additions, etc. The committee members were free to meet and speak directly at any time with the faculty who were submitting test questions. The purpose in using faculty "experts" to select questions for the test bank was to statistically "pre-qualify" the test bank questions. By April 1992 the Committee had developed the first of the pre-test instruments for a Fall 1992 test run.

The purpose in using faculty "experts" to select questions for the test bank was to statistically "pre-qualify" the test bank questions.

Although a consensus decision was reached in the Business Department to develop a multiple-choice pre-test instrument, we recognize that a number of qualitative assessment instruments exist which could also be used. For example, students could develop and submit portfolios; faculty could give students an oral examination; video tapes of students in the freshman experience class and before graduation could be used--many other kinds of qualitative assessment instruments are possible. The multiple-choice test was chosen because it is the easiest to quantify and, despite the complexity of construction, it is the easiest to administer and score. If desired, it can be used later to supplement other qualitative measures. We should remember, too, that the academic exam is only one test of four to be used college-wide; the others are tests for basic skills, general education, and student personal growth.

The work of constructing comprehensive pre-test instruments for the many Business programs was not an easy task, and the members of the Department Committee deserve our thanks and gratitude for their efforts. The Business Department at BCC is probably the first of any community college in the nation with enough consensus to even begin the development of an original, initial assessment instrument for a Business program. I predict that the Department will receive an invitation to present its results at an annual conference of the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs as soon as the Association learns of the work it did. The Educational Testing Service (ETS) is also interested in the results. I want Committee Chair Mid Semple and each of the committee members to know they have my sincere thanks and appreciation for a job well done.

Toward the 21st Century!

Wanda K. Johnston, LRC Director

The Chronicle ad which enticed me to Broome Community College read, "The candidate should have a vision of how a learning resources center can best serve the informational and instructional needs of students in the 21st century."

During the campus interview, I described my vision of the learning resources program as one which provides the resources and services necessary to serve the instructional and informational needs of its students, faculty, administrators, and broader college community. This vision included 1) the availability of adequate print, audiovisual, and electronic resources both on site at BCC and through external resource sharing agreements, 2) effective delivery systems to ensure the best possible access to these resources, whether by an individual or in the classroom, and 3) appropriate staff to enhance the use of these resources.

My original vision was based upon twenty years of professional experience, training, and trend-watching combined with my initial impressions of BCC's learning resources center. Since arriving on campus nine months ago, I have informally assessed learning resources program strengths and weaknesses and adjusted my vision to respond to the unique needs of the College.

Within the learning resources center (LRC), I listened to ideas and concerns, asked many "how?" and "why?" questions, reviewed documented statistics and procedures, studied the budget, observed faculty/staff as they provided services, and worried about resources and space.

Beyond the LRC, I visited each Division Chairs Meeting and every department which would invite me, discussed informally the learning resources program with everyone who wanted to share ideas or concerns, conducted a formal user satisfaction survey of BCC faculty and students, reviewed the ABET Report and comments from other accrediting teams, and hosted a series of "Chats About the LRC."

But what is this vision? I envision a core collection of print, audiovisual, and electronic resources available to support the curriculum. Every classroom faculty member shares his/her expertise by suggesting resources which serve the needs of BCC students. Esoteric and less used resources are obtained through interlibrary loan or rental sources. Reference librarians help faculty and students determine what information resources to use, how to access them, and how to critically evaluate their usefulness.

The vision includes electronic resources which allow more efficient access to resources. The LRC already participates in DIALOG which enables the searching of over one hundred specialized online databases and SUNY/OCLC which enables the location of resources throughout the nation. In the vision, faculty use office or home computers to view BCC and SUNY library holdings and to access nationwide electronic communication networks (SUNYnet and BITNET). The LRC is fully automated. In addition, access to electronic indexes and full-text databases from LRC terminals or from computers in offices or homes is available.

To encourage the individual use of audiovisual resources, the LRC provides audiovisual listening and viewing stations, including video, sound slide, audiocassette, and compact disc stations. In addition, student typewriters and computers are available. Each audiovisual station has simple instructions and LRC staff provide basic operational assistance. Students also receive basic production assistance with overhead transparencies, etc.

Every classroom is equipped with basic, standardized equipment, such as overhead projectors, video equipment, projection screens, etc. Larger classrooms and lecture halls are equipped with video and computer projection systems. Less frequently used equipment is delivered when scheduled. Upon request, LRC staff assist with the selection and creation of instructional support materials and with their implementation in the classroom. They help test and introduce new technologies, such as interactive multimedia.

Satellite and fiber optic technologies link BCC with Broome County, the State, and beyond. As participants in the SUNYSAT system, we bring in teleconferences and other programs distributed through satellite. As potential participants in the Broome Interconnect Project, we may be linked to area high schools, Roberson Center, Binghamton University, WSKG, and area businesses. The future possibilities of these projects and our television studio are numerous.

These resources and services are housed in a spacious, inviting facility which is centrally located on campus to encourage use by everyone. The reference area with adjacent classroom encourages use of reference resources as well as library instruction. This classroom comfortably seats 30 students and allows the projection of CD-ROM and the online card catalog for instructional purposes. Current periodicals are displayed in the periodical area with back issues adjacent. Students select either tables or lounge furniture for seating. The computer/audiovisual area provides public access computers, audiovisual equipment, basic production equipment, and equipment for the differently abled. Throughout the circulating collection are study carrels and individual study tables. Nearby are an adequate number of acoustically treated, group study rooms. Of course, areas for circulation, technical services, and offices are included.

(Continued on page 9)

Johnston (from page 8)

At the entrance to the audiovisual area is the audiovisual receptionist who routes all incoming requests, schedules the group viewing room and coordinates rentals and previews. Two video studios exist, one for speech classes, etc., and one for the Broome Interconnect Project. The control room/editing area is large enough to accommodate both college needs and student projects. The equipment storage and repair area houses lesser used equipment and that being repaired. More frequently used equipment is assigned to classrooms or stored in AV closets in each classroom building. In addition, space for offices, conferences, testing equipment, and more complex production is included.

How close is this vision to reality? Campuswide efforts to develop a "core collection" which supports BCC curricula is underway. Learning resources faculty/staff initiated an annual periodical subscription review, implemented the audiovisual preview-for-purchase procedure, and invited faculty participation in selecting materials to support the curriculum. Before retiring, Suzanne Sullivan reviewed every available course syllabus ensuring the LRC core collection included resources cited. The majority of the periodical collection was shifted to open stacks encouraging easy access. Subscriptions to the most heavily used periodical titles were duplicated in microfiche format. How-to-use-it signage was posted by every periodical index and audiovisual station.

Progress toward using electronic resources for information access has been made. The LRC now has six CD-ROM stations. BCC's participation in SUNYnet and BITNET is only months away. The LRC will be computerized as soon as SUNY assigns a date for participation in the statewide library automation project. LRC staff created a "resource station" enabling anyone to review the periodical holdings of libraries in a multi-county area and also, possibly, to access Binghamton University's library catalog.

> My vision is dynamic and undergoing continual adjustment as I learn more about Broome Community College and as I respond to LRC, collegewide, and external influences.

Effort to more effectively use LRC facilities has been made. With the assistance of maintenance, LRC staff rearranged the library creating space for the CD-ROM stations, bringing AV viewing stations to the main floor, adding a third photocopier and two computer stations, and replacing student typewriters. The television studio was moved into the building integrating AV and TV resulting in a one stop equipment reservation system and better service.

Share your vision. My vision is dynamic and undergoing continual adjustment as I learn more about Broome Community College and as I respond to LRC, collegewide, and external influences. Your reactions, questions, suggestions, and concerns will help bring this vision into clearer focus and ensure the learning resources program serves the instructional and informational needs of BCC students, faculty, administration, and broader college community. Please help create a vision that is not mine alone, but a shared vision as we move toward the 21st Century. ◻◻

As editor of the *Center Stage*, February Edition, I would like us to recognize the fine contribution of our peers. Would you please take a few moments in the space below to anonymously share something special about one of your colleagues. This could be related to a teaching strategy, a special way a colleague has with students or something unique about an individual that makes BCC the place it is. Let's pat each other on the back and communicate to others how much we value them. I would greatly appreciate your response by the end of the semester.

–Claire Ligeikis-Clayton

I would like to recognize the contributions of -

Name: ______________________ Department: ______________________

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Please return to Claire Ligeikis-Clayton, 901 Front Street

Beamish (from page 2)

should use data currently collected and evaluation programs already in place. For example, information of admissions, retention, and completion rates; results from surveys of students, alumni and employers; and findings of accreditation reports for the institution or degree programs as well as of program reviews should constitute critical components in assessment efforts.

3. Campus plans may include nationally available instruments or campus designed measures of a combination of the two approaches to assessment. The choice of instruments or measures will vary depending on the particular missions, goals, and programs of individual campuses.

4. Campus plans should include assessment of student performance and satisfaction at appropriate intervals during college and of alumni after graduation.

5. Campus plans should include assessment of student performance in computation and communication skills, general education, academic major, and personal and social growth.

6. Campuses should consider cost as well as impact on student and faculty in developing their assessment plans. It may be appropriate to use sampling procedures rather than measuring the performance of every student. In addition, every program need not be assessed each year but only on a regular schedule.

7. Faculty and students should participate actively in the development of assessment plans, in their implementation, and in the continuing efforts to use assessment to improve the institutional and student performance.

8. Campus plans should provide for periodic review on campus to ensure that the assessment procedures are academically sound, reflect the institutional mission and programs goals, and encourage program improvement.

9. Campus plans should provide for annual assessment reports on the level of institutional performance and the trends over time, especially in relation to institutional goals. Since the most important purpose of assessment is to improve performance (both institutional and student performance), these reports should include changes in programs and activities that resulted from problems or possibilities identified in prior reports.

Without guidelines such as Burke's to provide greater specificity for the assessment process the best efforts can founder on the shoals of idealism and vagueness. It should be understood that Burke's guidelines do not constitute a set of immutable rules which campuses must slavishly pursue under mandate of the state. They are primarily reminders to pay heed to activities already occurring on campus which feed the assessment process and to pull these together into a comprehensive and coordinated plan supplemented by new initiatives only where discrepancies appear in the existing process. They serve notice that regardless of how many assessment or pseudo-assessment activities are occurring, they do not constitute a comprehensive assessment plan when carried out in isolation.

BCC's assessment plan was recognized by the SUNY Provost in academic year 1990-91 as "...one of the best plans submitted from any of the Community Colleges in State University."

BCC took its first step toward creating a comprehensive outcomes assessment plan over three years ago when a committee representative of all campus constituencies submitted an outline of its proposed plan to SUNY central administration. Subsequently, a fully developed plan was produced by the College's Outcomes Assessment Committee which set forth the institution's assessment intentions for a five-year period. The plan provided detailed assessment goals and procedures in the areas of: (1) computation and communication skills, (2) academic majors, (3) general education, (4) student personal and social growth, and (5) the library. The plan was recognized by the SUNY Provost in academic year 1990-91 as "...one of the best plans submitted from any of the Community Colleges in State University." The plan was further modified in 1991-92 and is now being implemented across campus. Faculty are playing the major role in this on-going implementation process with strong support from administration and in close collaboration with the Office of Institutional Research.

Dodway (from page 4)

are correct poses a higher level of question. This self evaluation helps to develop metacognitive skill and assists in the formation of a problem solving strategy.

Research in the area has found that students who are most out of touch with what they know score near the bottom of the class. That is, not only do they not know the material, but they also do not know that they don't know it. This weakness damages not only present progress but also future growth, making the poor poorer.

Utilization of this added dimension furnishes us with information of a different kind about student understanding. Not to make use of this data is comparable to describing students with reference only to their shadows produced on the wall of Plato's cave, or judging a sculpture only by its footprint.

Blanchard (from page 12)

the validity and reliability of institutional grading. Add to this the option of portfolio presentation, as is being discussed in several quarters on campus, and an even more detailed assessment becomes possible. Elsewhere, many other measures are being considered and are yielding credible results. Among the best prospects are senior theses and research projects (especially those which focus on self-reliance), performance demonstrations, capstone courses, senior essays, external examiners (the OxBridge model), internship evaluations, and team projects.

...standard tests and locally-designed instruments can both be useful in judging outcomes, but they are even more illuminating when used in conjunction with each other.

A second lesson which outcomes assessment has repeatedly demonstrated is that seemingly separate areas of an institution -- and separate forms of assessment -- are very much related. At SUNY-Albany, a conclusion to this effect was contained in a recent report on assessment:

> ... this institution creates an ecologically interdependent environment. For example, student attainment of basic reading and writing and mathematics skills directly supports student performance in General Education and in the major. Further, the education benefit of our General Education program and the intellectual depth of the major are mutually reinforcing. Moreover, students must assume personal responsibility for their own growth in order to meet their responsibilities to the faculty. One's intellectual development cannot be easily separated from one's personal and social development, nor can liberal learning and disciplinary expertise be independent.

The same is no doubt true for a college like ours, and for our major areas of assessment: basic skills, the major, General Education, and student personal and social growth.

Assessment committees everywhere seem to be in perpetual flux either because of resistance to the idea of assessment or because membership on campus steering committees is hardly seen as a choice assignment.

Numerous suggestions have been made about how assessment information might be employed to enhance effectiveness. They have come from regional accreditating agencies, quite a number of specified accreditors, and not a few states (those governors again) which have attempted to tie funding and assessment together. The problem everywhere is to develop information that actually bears on outcomes and which can be applied unambiguously to policy and to teaching. Often the people who would benefit the most aren't motivated to devise useful measures or, once information is assembled, are unreceptive to the changes which are implied. Inertia is a formidable adversary. Then, too, there is the problem of personnel turnover. Assessment committees everywhere seem to be in perpetual flux either because of resistance to the idea of assessment or because membership on campus steering committees is hardly seen as a choice assignment. As one academic administrator wrote in *Assessment Update*,

> Every time we meet we have to re-explain the whole assessment rationale again because some members of the committee are always new. We barely get them informed and committed and they leave the committee.

Outcomes Assessment at Broome Community College has, of course, benefited from contributions from a number of sources including faculty, administrators, and even the state university's bureaucracy. On this last, there is no denying that the heavy hand of a University Provost, in the form of a statewide mandate, drew a number of independent factors together and prompted campus discussion of the assessment issue. These discussions may eventually have emerged without such coaxing, but they were certainly hastened by Albany's initiative. And all of that is to the good. Those of us who have been part of the activity acknowledge the contribution, even as we acknowledge the common wisdom that if higher education had not been moved to action, external agencies would have forced the issue, perhaps in ways which would not have been as comfortable as what we now see. We have now been through the "getting acquainted" stage.

We have had our seminars, read our briefing papers, conducted our initial workshops, learned "the language of assessment", studied the benefits which other campuses have derived from the movement, and considered the alternative of inaction. We have developed our departmental, general education, and personal growth plans. In some cases, we have even modified those plans. It is time to get down to the serious business of implementing what we have devised - to making good on the promises made in our plans -- to the end that we learn more about ourselves and about how we can become a more effective institution. Our shared commitment to our students and to their success will allow us nothing less.

Answers to the questions:

1. Not likely.
2. They are at the head of the parade.
3. It's up to us as a campus community.

Outcomes Assessment: The Big Questions

Bryan K. Blanchard, V.P.A.A.

1. Will it go away?
2. Does Harvard do it?
3. Can anything be learned from it?

(Answers appear at the end of this article.)

For those of you who thought outcomes assessment was a passing fancy or who thought they could wait it out, an observation: It is worth noting that the National Governors' Association, more than any other body in the country, has been the impetus behind the national assessment movement and that for the last twelve years our new president-elect has been a member -- for a time, even the chairman -- of that association. But why, you might ask, is this pertinent information? The reason behind all the gubernatorial interest has been two-fold. First, the governors have viewed assessment as a catalyst for improvement; and second, in tandem with their state legislatures, the governors have been asking tough questions about accountability, especially about whether the returns justify their educational investments. These points having been duly noted, I'd like to venture a prediction: With Mr. Clinton's election, the assessment movement is likely to gain steam, not lose it. What else would you expect from someone who yearns even more than his predecessor to be the education president?

> With Mr. Clinton's election, the assessment movement is likely to gain steam, not lose it.

Actually the prodding of the nation's governors has prompted many positive results, often from the most unexpected of places, and yielded insights which ought to challenge accepted practice. Sensing this potential, a few years ago Harvard's Derek Bok suggested outcomes assessment at his own institution. He reasoned that faculty well understood the potential of research and are inclined to it, that students would be receptive to participation, and that assessment could both prompt innovation and sort out its results. The product of his suggestion was the "Harvard Assessment Seminars" which have occasioned much careful thought about teaching and learning. For example, out of the seminars has come a detailed list of the most desirable features of highly respected courses, including the following specifics: immediate and detailed feedback, high demands and standards, opportunities to revise and improve work before it is graded, and frequent "checkpoints" like quizzes and short papers. These insights are just as applicable at BCC as at Harvard; and the potential for identifying others through classroom research is just as real here as in Cambridge.

Our campus could profit from a number of the other lessons which have been gleaned from the outcomes assessment movement. Among these are two which have emerged from recent New York State experience. The first is that many different methods may be used with good success; and, indeed, approaches utilizing multiple measures show promise of providing the best overall picture of student achievement and institutional effectiveness. For example, standard tests and locally-designed instruments can both be useful in judging outcomes, but they are even more illuminating when used in conjunction with each other. Moreover, when high correlations result, confidence in the separate measurements rises, and this can also shed light on

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This Issue

Eric Beamish and Linda Mapes co-edited this issue of *Center Stage*. Dr. Beamish has been involved in the national assessment movement for over ten years, and a contributor to the BCC Outcomes Assessment initiative since its inception. Ms. Mapes joined the Institutional Research Staff in 1990. She currently represents BCC at the Two-Year College Development Center's Tech-Prep Evaluation and Assessment Task Force.

Upcoming Issues

The February issue of Center Stage will be devoted to Multiculturalism and edited by Roberta Williams. In March, Claire Ligeikis-Clayton provides a special issue recognizing the contribution of our peers. The April issue, edited by Marilyn Akins, will present faculty thoughts on Problem Solving. In addition to these topics, articles on the theme "Human Discovery" will be included throughout the year. If you would like to share your thoughts on one of these topics, please contact the appropriate editor.

Articles are usually 500 words, but may be longer or shorter. Electronic copies of articles should be submitted to the Teaching Resource Center one to two months before publication. Please contact the Teaching Resource Center for instructions and assistance.

Send correspondence and contributions to the publications manager:
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Center Stage

A Platform for the Discussion of Teaching/Learning Ideas
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In this month's *Center Stage*, writers explore the theme of Multicultural Education from a variety of perspectives. Bryan Blanchard examines arguments from various sides in the national debate and predicts "an outcome squarely in the tradition of the university, a product of contrasting viewpoints..." Anna Halligan suggests, in her analysis of history as narrative, that multiculturalism will move us beyond the limits of a single narrative view. Rebecca Bennett writes of exciting discoveries during a sabbatical study of Native American cultures. Jack Foster gives an overview of the work of those who "do" multicultural education. Michael Kuryla addresses the issue of domestic diversity within a global business context. Marlene Benson discusses the relevance of cultural differences in the provision of nursing care, and Tricia Newland tells of activities that help future nurses understand the differences. Ernie Giordani describes the multicultural experience of "monocultural" students in a foreign-language classroom. Finally, Nilsa Mariano shares a student's perspective on multiculturalism. The articles will enlighten and inspire. I thank all who contributed.

-- Roberta Williams, Editor

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MULTICULTURALISM: A Program Guide To The Debates

Bryan K. Blanchard, V.P.A.A.

The issue of multiculturalism has been quite controversial in higher education, provoking on some campuses a good deal more heat than light. It is an issue with many facets and with multiple implications for Academe. Depending upon the particular circumstances, multiculturalism can refer to employment policy, student recruitment, codes of conduct, activities programming, faculty/professional development, the curriculum, and even institutional mission. The purpose of this article is to offer a brief assessment of the issue to date and to suggest a framework for its continuing interpretation.

The term multiculturalism connotes a society which embraces numerous equivalent cultural traditions and suggests evolution from a much more homogeneous past, perhaps a "monoculturalism." This, of course, is less truth than political statement since the United States has always been a blend of peoples and our basic cultural underpinnings are hardly disappearing. It is rather that the divisions of today are being drawn along new lines, and "culture" is the label of choice to describe them. Actually, if the term multiculturalism is used imprecisely that is likely a result of

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A Piercing Glance

Anna C. Halligan, English

Once upon a time a visionary mariner crossed the uncharted Atlantic and discovered a new world. The narrative breaks down at this point because the story of the ocean journey is clearer than the story of the meeting between Columbus and the Taino people. All narrative is grounded in the view of the narrator and the needs of the audience. From the beginning of the European encounter with the peoples of the Western Hemisphere, one narrative view prevailed. Convinced of their superiority, convinced of the rightness of their journey, the Europeans were unprepared for the multiplicity of peoples and cultures. Their narrative view of the conquest had to be the right one. Yet, other narrative views -- the voices of those who protested the enslavement of the native peoples and of the Africans, and the voices of the enslaved and the conquered -- were also available, but it has taken 20th Century schol-

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Blanchard (from page 1)

how it came into fashion, i.e. more through a political debate than an intellectual one, and this presents us with a potential source of problems: Not everyone agrees on what it means and so everyone feels free to use it according to their own purposes. And purposes there are in abundance, including building a new sort of pluralism, balancing a perceived Eurocentric focus, sensitizing students to diverse viewpoints, and establishing a global culture, to name but a few.

Some observers see multiculturalism as the most recent stage in the evolution of American higher education. They might describe the earlier stages as 1) the traditional stage, where a common culture was transmitted to a homogeneous student body; 2) the melting pot stage, where a limited number of individuals from outside the dominant class enrolled to be recast in the image of the dominant class; 3) the diversity stage, where access became more open and the student body began to at least represent the general composition of the larger society; and 4) the multicultural stage, where so many individuals from outside the dominant class gain access to institutions that they manage to preserve their own cultural backgrounds on campus, and the institutions aim to convert group differences into educational experiences. The proponents of multiculturalism would argue that it is only through this most recent stage that institutions can realize their goal of inclusion and truly prepare students for lives within a pluralistic society. Their opponents would counter that the content of the curriculum is being diluted by a quota-like attempt to represent every subgroup and its purported achievements.

Viewed in this way, multiculturalism may be seen as just a logical extension of a very long tradition and the current debate as a useful dialectic which will ultimately benefit our understanding.

The problem with this brief history of academic development is that it takes much too narrow a view of the university -- and the community college -- and the values which have grown up within it. Ours is an eclectic heritage which has long aspired to inclusion, even as our society has resisted it, from the earliest beginnings of our democratic traditions to the maturing of our academic disciplines. To those on the outside -- and all of us are descended from former outsiders -- it has been frustratingly slow; but then the question must always be asked, compared to what? The debate we are now witnessing is thus congruent with our turbulent past, and is actually being played out by individuals who are already "in". Still, it is my basic contention that what the critics allege is largely true -- that inclusion must continue in terms of culture and curriculum -- and that the directions they point in are valid. It is just that what the critics offer is already deeply embedded within the Academy and that these self-same directions were charted long ago. Viewed in this way, multiculturalism may be seen as just a logical extension of a very long tradition and the current debate as a useful dialectic which will ultimately benefit our understanding. What is unnecessary, however, is the acrimony and the mean-spiritedness which both critics and defenders alike harbor in such great measure for each other.

Consider a few examples from the most recent episodes of the multicultural debates. Reginald Wilson of the American Council on Education suggests that until recently historians have looked at slavery only from the perspective of slave owners and this has yielded a rather benign interpretation of the "peculiar" institution of slavery. The trouble is that Wilson seeks to be more confrontational than enlightening. What he should also say is that historians have always sought primary evidence on their subjects and have modified their opinions when new evidence comes to light. In the case of slavery, historians themselves have delved into the past to retrieve materials previously ignored. When Wilson commends the Federal Writers' Project of the 1930's, a New Deal initiative, for helping amend our interpretation, what he neglects to do is to commend the practicing historians who suggested the project in the first place. Similarly, in this anniversary year of the Columbian voyages, when we hear angry denunciations of the European explorers and the claim that "no one could discover the Americas when there were so many people here already", we hear nary a word about the context of the discovery claim, that what Columbus discovered was simply new to Europeans. The reason, of course, is that such matter-of-factness just isn't good theater and therefore appeals to neither side of the argument. And the same holds true for Columbus' much debated guilt: For the rest of us to take sides in the battle, we would have to believe that European culture wasn't expanding in the fifteenth century and that the peoples of Europe and the Americas would never have collided had it not been for one man and the events of his life. Examples of this sort of intellectual posturing exist on the other side, too, as evidenced by the attempt to show that Europe suffered an equivalent devastation as a result of disease contracted in the Americas. Such claims ordinarily excoriate written history for its inattention to balance while they themselves pretend to install a kind of rough justice.

That such denunciations should be leveled at historians is ironic because no other discipline has for so long concerned itself with the problem of bias. The discipline even went so far as to invent a subfield, historiography, to deal with the question. Indeed, for many eminent historians, bias has been a hair shirt, to be worn proudly and self-consciously, if for no other reason than to prove that one always knows that it is there. Strange, then, that historians should be accosted with the claim "all knowledge is political" and expected to recoil from the accusation. The only proper response is: Of course! But why have you come so lately upon this discovery? The implication of the choice of

(Continued on page 11)

A Practical Approach to Multiculturalism

Jack D. Foster, Engineering Science

There remains and will always remain a distinction between multicultural "education" and multicultural "awareness". The first has its roots in the mind, the second is rooted in the heart. Beginning with the former is the first step for many institutions. This paper proposes that it is better to begin with activities which raise one's awareness of the benefits of multiculturalism in the American society today. What will inevitably follow is a cooperative effort by administration, faculty and students to formally incorporate multiculturalism in the curriculum at BCC.

In my engineering discipline, I usually try to strike a balance between theoretical studies and practical applications. But it never works. Invariably the scales tip toward the practical side of things. I accept that. I accept the fact that I learn best by doing. I accept the fact that involvement means greater commitment of time and usually means that a miscue or a failure will be there for everyone to see. I need the application to see the theory. I need activities to expand my knowledge base. Through activities my emotions are piqued. What usually ensues is further study, greater emotional involvement and more personal commitment.

We need more colloquia and video conferences, but we also need a parallel commitment on our campus where we encourage and support people who are "doing" multicultural education already.

Walt Whitman wrote a poem entitled "When I Heard the Learned Astronomer" in 1865 where he also pointed to the need for factual based knowledge supported by emotional involvement. It is a favorite of mine and it articulates my opinion as to how we can best ensure a measure of multicultural education on this campus.

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

Planning, setting goals, writing mission statements, are all essential for a successful venture into multicultural education at BCC. We should benchmark with other college communities and learn what works and what needs improvement. We need more colloquia and video conferences, but we also need a parallel commitment on our campus where we encourage and support people who are "doing" multicultural education already. We need to encourage them to tell us what they are doing, learn why they are so successful and carry back the successes into our own classrooms.

We have the human resources available to immediately expand our activities related to multicultural appreciation.

Recently our college aired a video conference on race relations. The panel consisted of distinguished professors, college presidents, and news commentators. They spoke eloquently on the matter. Then the phone rang. The questions from the rank and file on the campuses were not about the theory or history of race relations, but simple questions that began with "How can I..." and "What can we do to ...". The questioners were ready and willing to get involved. The commitment was there. They needed some practical advice.

Our campus is fortunate to have such a diverse population of students. We have the human resources available to immediately expand our activities related to multicultural appreciation. We can learn from our colleagues who are veterans at providing multicultural exposure to our students. They are requiring activities in their courses that cause students to seriously consider opinions of classmates from different cultures. This is being done in language courses, engineering courses, history courses, business courses, and economics courses. All these examples, you will note, begin with a need for students of diverse background to talk to each other. Some situations establish an environment of dependency for academic survival (not unlike the dependency among individuals from various nations working together for survival in the economic community).

Here is a partial list of activities your colleagues are currently doing to promote multicultural education on our campus. I know there are many more.

1. A foreign language professor requires her students to interview foreign students on campus.

2. Students work in groups to solve an open-ended problem where design and creativity are necessary ingredients for an acceptable solution. Students from diverse backgrounds are mixed among the groups.

(Continued on page 4)

Foster (from page 3)

3. Good grades (rewards) are given to the groups that effectively use the talents of all their members in problem solving. All members in the group receive the same grade.

4. Faculty assign readings and activities that demonstrate the need for interdependency among nations. This is relevant in areas of business, health, food production, and environmental issues. For example, consider the global impact that cutting virgin forests in the world will have on the economy of the country, the environment, medical research, lavish life styles of other countries, and the displaced indigenous people of the forest.

5. Faculty are traveling to other countries and actively exploring other cultures. They quickly realize that they learn more about themselves and their own country than about the country they visit. Mark Twain, in his book, *Innocents Abroad*, speaks about the need to travel and what effect it has on the traveler.

> *"Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely. ...Broad, wholesome, charitable views...... can not be acquired by vegetating in one's little corner of earth."*

6. The sponsors of the International Student Organization encourage local students to become members and participate in their activities.

The challenge for us today is to see this shrinking globe as a window of opportunity to heighten our sensitivity to the values of a multicultural society.

World-class educators are those who encourage students to see their discipline as a fraction of the whole body of knowledge, knowledge that is an aggregate of many centuries and many countries and many cultures. World-class educators expose their students to the way their discipline impacts the lives and cultures of countries other than our own. BCC has world-class educators. They are constantly encouraging their colleagues and students alike to see the world as a sphere which is shrinking rapidly. The challenge for us today is to see this shrinking globe as a window of opportunity to heighten our sensitivity to the values of a multicultural society. We learn best about ourselves when we learn about others.

Multiculturalism and Foreignlanguagism: Birds of a Feather

Ernie Giordani, English

In his article "Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-Cultural Education" found in *Language Learning: A Journal of Applied Linguistics* 16 (1066): 1-20, Robert Kaplan records Leo Spitzer's remarks: "Every language offers to its speakers a ready-made interpretation of the world, truly a *Weltanschauung*, a metaphysical world-picture, which after having originated in the thinking of our ancestors, tends to impose itself ever anew on posterity." In short, *we are our language*. Thus we are not surprised that linguistic, cultural clashes often occur when "a predominantly monocultural society..." is in transition "...to an increasingly multicultural one" (Wilson, "Diversifying the Arts and Letters Curriculum" 1).

Since most students in a predominantly monocultural society are not members of multicultural groups, a foreign language classroom often places the foreign language learner in the uncommon, uncomfortable, and awkward position where his or her native language is virtually useless...

In Step 4 of her five-step model of transition from a monocultural to a multicultural curriculum, Peggy McIntosh explains, "Getting inside the Outsider - is when the outsider becomes the central but separate focus" (10). Since most students in a predominantly monocultural society are not members of multicultural groups, a foreign language classroom often places the foreign language learner in the uncommon, uncomfortable, and awkward position where his or her native language is virtually useless in communicating appropriately in order to perform the simplest tasks. Paradoxically, the foreign language classroom provides the arena where numbers of monocultural students become Outsiders.

In subjecting themselves to a foreign set of linguistic rules, social customs and values, these students' self-esteem is at risk with every utterance.

Certainly we cannot equate the language acquisition struggles of most students studying foreign languages with those difficulties of multicultural groups experiencing social, political, economic and religious adversity. Nevertheless, students primarily at the beginning and intermediate levels of foreign language acquisition are, in a sense, sensitized to aspects of the multicultural ordeal because of their shared plumage: frustration born of linguistic limitation.

Multicultural and Cross-Cultural Linkages

Michael Kuryla, Business

Cultural diversity is one of the many challenges of international business. If there were only one set of global values and beliefs, a more efficient standardization of production and marketing processes would arise. However, each nation embodies various societal, business, and corporate cultures. Multinational businesses in the U.S. have recognized that to succeed in a diverse and increasingly competitive global environment they must make sure all employees have sufficient cross-cultural skills and awareness. Failure to achieve this end means reduced absolute growth for the firm and ultimately a reduced portion for beneficiaries in the U.S. (workers, executives, suppliers, and stockholders). In contrast, the remainder of the U.S. citizenry and business community have not been ahead of the curve in recognizing the need to understand and work within diverse environments to achieve their economic goals.

After World War I, the U.S. possessed the largest single marketplace and enjoyed the protection of relative geographic isolation. During this period we developed some attributes which created competitive disadvantages for a future world of faxes, just-in-time inventory, and economic integration (EC 92). We have been willing to forsake, and probably have forsaken, some of our potential economic growth by being satisfied with comparative economic well-being rather than absolute economic well-being. Professor Robert Reich, President Clinton's Labor Secretary, asks participants in classes and corporate training seminars in the U.S. to choose between the following: a) 20 percent U.S. economic growth and 90 percent Japanese economic growth or b) 8 percent U.S. growth and 8.2 percent Japanese growth by the year 2000. The majority of respondents select the second option.

This drive for and position of being "number 1" has nurtured the belief that we don't need to know much about other countries and cultures for "they" (the rest of the world) will in time come around to "our way" of speaking, working, living and believing as long as we are "number 1". In a Gallup organization international geography survey given to 18- to 24-year-olds in Sweden, Mexico, and the G-7 industrialized nations, the U.S. finished last. Another Gallup survey revealed that the U.S. is last in believing that the ability to speak a foreign language is important.

A commonly heard maxim outside the U.S.:

If you speak three languages, you're trilingual.
If you speak two languages, you're bilingual.
If you speak one language, you're American.

Today, a more global and competitive business environment influences the strategies of the largest corporations down to the smallest international enterprises. This environment has led to a much greater emphasis on cross-cultural training for U.S. employees working within a firm's global network. Economic well-being, if not survival, is dependent on preparation of all the firm's human and physical resources for the diverse global markets of this and the 21st century.

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This linking of economic well-being and cross-cultural understanding in international business can be transferred to the area of multiculturalism in the U.S. Similar to the essentiality for cultivating a cross-cultural perspective and awareness as a minimum requirement for economic success outside the U.S., so too must we develop a multicultural perspective and awareness for economic success within the U.S. In the international business marketplace, the customer, supplier, investor, boss, employee or fellow worker is ever more likely to be a person who is a foreign national. Likewise, in the domestic business marketplace the customer, supplier, investor, boss, employee, or fellow worker will be ever more likely to be of another race, creed, ethnic origin, sex or combination of the preceding. The requirement for successful interaction requires awareness of and sensitivity to diversity.

Regardless of the reasons, the business community's "enlightened self-interest" will share the stage on the promotion of multicultural understanding and learning.

The promotion of multicultural learning based on the economic benefit will, for many, have a hollow ring to it. Reasons of social and economic justice are more common in the discourse on the subject. Another view is implied in John Kenneth Galbraith's *Culture of Contentment*, where he presents a worst case scenario in which efforts to improve the lives of the underclass must succeed or the undercurrent of dissatisfaction may surface in a more threatening face to the "contented class". Regardless of the reasons, the business community's "enlightened self-interest" will share the stage on the promotion of multicultural understanding and learning.

In the 2nd and 3rd Centuries, eastern glassmakers, especially Syrians, responded to the market opportunities created by the growing Roman Empire by migrating to Western Europe. Recently, the U.S. Congress increased immigration quotas 40 percent. Workers will continue to relocate to gain better returns, thus assuring increased

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Kuryla (from page 5)

diversity in our communities and workplaces. The academic community has assisted the business community in preparing employees for a diverse global economy and has a similar role domestically.

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The process of instilling a more global perspective in our students is also helpful in creating a climate for multicultural learning and understanding. In teaching the course "Social and Cultural Aspects of International Business/Business in a Global Environment" (SOS/BUS 116), I utilize activities that might open and expand the students' views of themselves, their nation, and other nations and peoples in the context of a global business environment. The experience of living in another country would be the best instructor for this task, but too few students avail themselves of overseas study opportunities, and course field trips are not feasible. With this limitation, I can only attempt to increase exposure and awareness of other countries and cultures with the resources available.

In addition to the normal readings, lectures, videos, case studies and in-class projects, I try to incorporate a number of activities that will involve the student in the unfamiliar. The semester begins with a "Nation Project" where each student is given a country (less developed or less well known) to research in terms of geography, political organization, economic data, and other social and demographic characteristics.

In addition to the normal readings, lectures, videos, and in-class projects, I try to incorporate a number of activities that will involve the student in the unfamiliar.

The students are also asked to view, outside of class, four video tapes of films from a two-category list provided. At least two films viewed must be from the foreign produced category and the rest from a group of U.S. produced films with international content. They are asked to write an analysis of two of the films in terms of cultural, social, economic, and political differences identified in other countries portrayed. They are also asked to reflect on some considerations for doing business in and/or living in the country depicted. Lastly, they rate the films so that I get a sense of how enjoyable or painful an experience it was for them to view certain films.

Each student is required to attend and write a report on an international cultural or international business event. In the past, students have attended campus events such as a performance by the folk group Andes Manta from Ecuador, South America, or international business and economic lectures and seminars. Off campus, a group attended the yearly community-wide Middle East dinner-dance that a student in their class from Lebanon had helped organize. Others have attended events sponsored by The Southern Tier World Commerce Association. Often the student will open a report with "I didn't expect to enjoy..." and end with "I really found it interesting and am glad I went" after attending an event.

Each class we discuss current international events and articles from an international business reader and a mini-subscription to *World Press Review*. I try to share examples of experiences that I have had overseas when it can be useful in adding clarity to a concept or issue. Superior to my experience are the experiences of those in the classroom. Each class usually includes international students, students who have immigrated to the U.S., students who work in an international business capacity (a number of whom have reported their insights to the class after returning from short overseas assignments during the semester), and others with travel, family, and foreign language experience.

We must also be sensitive in the quest to prepare the student for globally and domestically diverse work environments that we do not attempt to boil down the diversity for ease of delivery and acceptance.

We are limited in the exposure and awareness of other cultures that can be imparted in a semester. We must also be sensitive in the quest to prepare the student for globally and domestically diverse work environments that we do not attempt to boil down the diversity for ease of delivery and acceptance. More and more literature is available in cross-cultural training that attempts to package a country and its people nicely into certain generalized characteristics. Some of the "do's and don't's" are comical. Can we really expect most Germans to offer an elbow or forearm in lieu of a dirty hand for a hand shake? Would we be comfortable with an instructor in another country suggesting, "Most people in the United States listen to Elvis Presley and eat Lucky Charms"?

The recent presidential election raised the issue of the U.S.'s capacity to meet the global challenges as being predicated on our ability to meet the domestic challenges at home. Likewise, our ability to prepare and organize our human resources for a diverse and changing global business environment will be predicated on our ability to prepare and organize our human resources for a diverse and changing domestic business environment.

Transcultural Nursing

Marlene Benson, Nursing

By the year 2000, 25 percent of the population in this country will be immigrants, according to many predictions. As this diverse group grows in number, it seems appropriate to think of this country not as a "melting pot" but as a "cultural mosaic" in which many different people are recognized and appreciated. We begin to realize that imposing our cultural lifeways and values on this population would not only be a tremendous task but is no longer an acceptable expectation. As we begin to recognize that differences enrich this culture and represent valued perspectives, the importance of culturally distinct variables becomes part of our respect and caring approach for our clients in nursing. Although this appears to be a fairly recent consideration, if we look closely at nursing research we find that this movement began forty years ago.

Transcultural nursing was defined and initially recognized in this country by Madeleine Leininger during the mid-1950's. She was the driving force behind the study and practice of nursing which emphasized the values, beliefs, and life practices of clients. She considered cultural information the broadest perspective to understanding the client and essential for planning and providing care which considered all aspects of the client (holistic care). In Western cultures, this holistic approach began with the assessment of the biological, psychological, and sociological aspects of the client before the cultural information was obtained. It is interesting to note that in the Non-Western world, the cultural perspectives are obtained first.

Today we realize that client expectations regarding the caring quality of nursing as well as the ability of the nurse to influence present and future health are jeopardized if nurses neglect to consider beliefs, values, and lifeways. Nursing education emphasizes discussing the plan of care, including treatments and goals with the client, so a mutually acceptable plan will be followed in the pursuit of health. This allows rejection of practices which are contrary to cultural beliefs and will not be valued or followed once control is assumed by the client upon discharge. Thus the discussion regarding preferences is most important to the trusting nurse/client relationship. The nurse's role includes describing treatments and tests prior to the experience and collaborating with physicians and other health care personnel to coordinate and enhance treatment and progress. Client advocacy also allows the nurse to communicate cultural preferences to the multiple health care providers who interface with the client in all facilities today. The client advocacy role is necessary to enhance the feeling of individualized care.

As nurses we must be cognizant of the differences between cultures and guard against imposing our standard

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Transcultural Nursing Education: Students as Teachers

Tricia Newland, Nursing

One of my teaching challenges for the first semester nursing students was to expose the students to a variety of cultural and religious beliefs and values, in order to identify considerations for providing nursing care in a culturally diverse society. Since cultural and religious beliefs affect one's health care practices and choices, it was felt that exposure to a variety of cultural preferences would provide a framework for incorporating differences into nursing care of individuals.

Through interdepartmental collaboration among campus faculty, student speakers were found who were personally familiar with other cultures and willing to address some of the nursing class objectives. Students who volunteered to prepare and deliver oral presentations for the nursing students were rewarded by their teacher with extra credit toward their course grades.

> Students addressed cultural and/or religious variations related to health care beliefs...

Students chose one to two of the nursing classroom objectives to focus the content of their presentations. Each student spoke for five to ten minutes, and afterwards entertained questions from the nursing students. Students addressed cultural and/or religious variations related to health care beliefs and practices from the countries of Norway, Japan, India, and Korea. In addition, a nursing student who had lived in a Central American country for six years addressed the class with a similar presentation.

The student speakers were enthusiastic and informative in their presentations. The nursing students were very attentive and appreciative of the perspectives conveyed by these student experts from the cultures they represented.

As I was not totally certain of each student's presentation content ahead of time, I utilized the required reading assignments as a basis to choose questions for the forthcoming exam. I arranged to have each student's presentation videotaped, which was useful for two reasons. I showed the tape in another section of the same class which met later that day, and I sent the tape on to the faculty person who would be granting extra credit to the speakers.

I feel it was an experiment in classroom technique which, in this case, proved to be a very enjoyable, interesting, and successful approach. It also happened to be the last class of the semester, thus concluding the course with a really positive program. I hope to be able to replicate this technique for future classes on transcultural issues.

Educating for a Diverse Future

Nilsa Evette Mariano, Student

The idea of a single civilization for everyone, implicit in the cult of progress and technique, impoverishes and mutilates us. Every view of the world that becomes extinct, every culture that disappears, diminishes a possibility of life.

--Octavio Paz

According to a 1989 Census Bureau projection, during the decades from 1990 to 2030 the white population will grow about 25 percent. During that same 40-year period, the African-American population will increase about 68 percent, the Asian-American, Pacific-Island and American Indian populations will grow by 79 percent, and the Latino or Hispanic population of the U.S. will increase by 187 percent. How will we approach the educational needs of these diverse groups? How will we use their talents? How will the business world absorb them?

Mainstream or exclusively Eurocentric curriculum denies all groups the opportunity to learn and see their cultures from other viewpoints.

Although we live in a multiculturally diverse society, the educational system is based on the history and experiences of mainstream (primarily Western European) Americans as the dominant cultural group. Mainstream or exclusively Eurocentric curriculum denies all groups the opportunity to learn and see their cultures from other viewpoints. Children are taught--indeed even college curricula teach--that Columbus "discovered" America, not that it was an "accidental landing." Enlightened teaching would at the very least be honest. Acknowledgement of the courage, fortitude and greed that motivated these voyages would do more to motivate critical thinking and inspire research projects than any white-washed (no pun intended) text-reading would.

It is the very lack of critically balanced scholarship that encourages cultural stereotypes of indigenous peoples and apathy about the past. Are not different perspectives the life-blood of scholastic inquiry? An exclusively Eurocentric curriculum denies all groups the ability to share experiences, to learn, and to probe the inter-connectedness and effects of our various historical backgrounds. On the contrary, what it does is reinforce cultural conflict by excluding or compartmentalizing the history of various ethnic groups who have lived and impacted on this nation. This denies validity to all groups and prepares no one to work, live and compete in a multicultural world.

Imagine my surprise when, upon deciding to do a term paper on multiculturalism and the classroom, I could find only one reference book in the BCC Library. Even with the help of the library staff, I could find no books on the subject, and the listing for "Multicultural" referred to inter-country cultures as opposed to a single multicultural society. I was referred to the Binghamton University library and there found a significiant amount of research materials to work with. My consternation and anxiety on not finding any materials of worth at the BCC library did not seem to be shared by its staff, a staff who had very politely been so helpful on other projects. However, I felt, albeit briefly, that the validity of my subject--its significance and import--was perhaps questionable or even irrelevant. Since then I have come across the library handout on Cultural Diversity and felt more encouraged.

Still, the limitation of resources indicates that the importance of multiculturalism, the prioritization, has not yet impacted this campus. As they say in the business world, you've got to buy into the program to promote it effectively. What kind of message does this impart? Is the concept of multiculturalism to remain on the periphery of college life and scholarship, a victim of the political struggles between the extreme right and left?

In 1993, the concept of multiculturalism has been around for at least twenty years and its implementation drags on. When I took a few college courses in the mid-seventies, there were few minorities attending and even fewer graduating; sad to say, the statistics have not changed much. The statistics on minority faculty fare no better, and the numbers with tenure are lonely indeed.

Multiculturalism holds the greatest possibility for developing critical thinkers, something the American school system sorely lacks and corporate America needs.

Meaningful multiculturalism strives to transform the curriculum, the pedagogy, the very atmosphere of education. As the American philosopher John Dewey observed: "The key to democracy as a way of life may be expressed as the necessity for the participation of every mature being in the formation of the values that regulate the living of men together...all those who are affected by social institutions must have a share in producing and managing them." I look forward to a time when I can sit in a classroom without being put in the position of spokesperson on minority issues; the position of spokesperson becomes especially awkward when no dialogue is generated due to a profound lack of knowledge and/or due to apathy of my fellow students or, even sadder, of the instructor.

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"Getting Lost" in the U.S.A.: A View of Multiculturalism

Rebecca L. Bennett, English

When we were first married, my husband Alan and I traveled through Europe by train. After being "on the rails" for several weeks, we found ourselves in Oslo, Norway and checked into a small hotel. I took a nap while Alan and the two friends we were traveling with explored the city on foot. Several hours passed and when Alan finally returned--looking tired and a bit anxious--I found out that he and our friends had decided to take different routes and that he had been wandering around lost--actually walking in circles, unable to ask for directions because he couldn't speak the language--for a couple of hours. It was a humbling experience--one that we still talk about and take pains to avoid! It has made Alan more sympathetic with the difficulties new international students experience when they first step off the plane in this "strange" country, and it's made both of us more observant of those little details in our surroundings that give one a clear sense of direction. In many ways, this experience has become a metaphor for me in thinking about my attitudes toward multicultural education. I've come to realize, however, that one needn't be in a "foreign" country to be "lost"!

> Obtaining a multicultural education involves, in essence, losing ourselves... in order to find out something about people with a different shared past and a different set of assumptions.

During my sabbatical this semester, I've been studying American Indian* cultures and working toward the development of a new course in Native American literature to be offered at B.C.C.. The range of materials and genres I've encountered, the complicated philosophies and cosmogonies I've studied, and the new symbolic perspectives I'm beginning to become acquainted with have all humbled me. After twenty-three years of teaching literature (and forty years of reading it!), I feel like a child lost in the woods (or like Alan wandering the streets of Oslo!). Being lost--either physically or mentally--is, however, a most valuable experience and one that we can all learn something from. Obtaining a multicultural education involves, in essence, losing ourselves (our personal and social histories, our cultural biases, and our traditional assumptions) in order to find out something about people with a different shared past and a different set of assumptions. The end result, hopefully, is that we will grow as thinkers, educators and--most importantly--as people! Even though I've been involved in "internationalizing the curriculum" efforts for a number of years and have included some works from Chinese, Japanese, African, West Indian, South American (and other) authors in my courses, I will confine my remarks here to the experiences I've had in dealing with the various North American Indian cultures and their traditional myths and stories that I've concentrated on during my sabbatical.

I guess I've always been interested in "multicultural" learning--even though I'd never even heard the term until a few years ago! I recall visiting the Indian Village at the New York State Fair in Syracuse as a child and being fascinated with the paintings done by reservation school pupils of Hah-nu-nah, the Turtle--the Earth Bearer of Iroquois myth--with colorful trees, flowers, animals and people growing out of his back! My maternal grandfather had a large collection of Indian arrowheads, and my siblings and I would study them by the hour--feeling the sharp edges, memorizing the feel of the thumbprint ridges in the stone, thinking about what it would have been like to be an Indian child, living in a Round House or a "Tee-Pee." My formal education in public school and in college, however, was decidedly "monocultural," focusing--ironically, I feel now--on ENGLISH culture, not American! (As an undergraduate at Fredonia State I can remember the strong bias most of the professors in the English Department had against United States Literature. Even when I started teaching at B.C.C. twenty-two years ago, British Literature was required of ALL Liberal Arts students, just as it had been for me at Fredonia.) Of course, in elementary school we had studied the kinds of structures the Indians built, what they ate, the kinds of weapons they used in battle, etc.--but we never approached the study of Indian myth or philosophy in a serious way.

I find it particularly ironic that studying the cultures of the people who have lived on what is now United States soil for perhaps thousands of years is in many ways more difficult than anything I've encountered in my formal education. One difficulty, of course, is that there are hundreds of Indian languages and dialects--the majority of which contrast with our concept of language and our use of words. As Joseph Epes Brown states, "In Native languages the understanding is that the meaning is in the sound, it is in the word; the word is not a symbol for a meaning which has been abstracted out; word and meaning are together in one experience." (*I Become Part of It*, 13) For those of us used to dealing with words as merely symbolic, this is a very difficult concept to grasp. Indian myths have been handed down by oral tradition, and our "Western" bias toward print creates another difficulty in understanding stories recorded by anthropologists, missionaries, etc., who may or may not have changed the tales to "justify" (perhaps unconsciously)

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* Throughout this essay I'll be using the word 'Indian' more frequently than the phrase 'Native American' to identify the various aboriginal peoples and their descendents who live and have lived in what we now know as the United States. Even though the word 'Indian' is of course a misnomer, it still seems less awkward than the longer phrase. I certainly do not wish to offend anyone, but none of the Indians I've met during my travels and research this semester seems to feel offended by this terminology. I therefore choose to employ it in the name of brevity.

Bennett (from page 9)

their own beliefs. Symbolism is yet another area of confusion. Just one small example is that the snake in many Indian stories (especially those of the Southwestern tribes) is a sacred creature, an animal who often helps his human brothers (as in the Sioux tale known as "The Snake Brothers.") Our Western identification of snakes as evil and destructive, as "cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field" (*Genesis;* III:14) may make it difficult for us to understand the final injuction in this Sioux myth: "If the rattlesnake brothers have not died in the meantime, they are still helping us today. That's why we never kill rattlesnakes." (*Erdoes and Ortiz*, 407)

Linearity permeates our culture and is demonstrated in everything from the way we read printed material to the way we view the progression of life toward death.

Another aspect of Indian culture that may confuse us is the Native perception of time as circular or cyclical rather than linear. (This is, of course, similar to many Eastern philosophies like Buddhism and Hinduism.) Linearity permeates our culture and is demonstrated in everything from the way we read printed material to the way we view the progression of life toward death. We tend to look at time as beginning at a certain point and ending at another point, somewhere in the linear "future"--often believing that (as General Electric used to be fond of stating) "Progress is our most important product." Many Native peoples focus on the cyclical and circular aspects of life and of the natural environment, embracing a philosophy of reciprocity--i.e. what is taken away must be given back. In Indian myths and stories, natural phenomena that reflect this circular concept are reinforced--the "wheel" of the seasons, the shape of a bird's nest, the orbital web of a spider, etc. Many Native people do not even say goodbye when quitting another's company because it implies finality!

In Indian myths and stories, natural phenomena that reflect this circular concept are reinforced--the "wheel" of the seasons, the shape of a bird's nest, the orbital web of a spider, etc.

The final cultural difference I'd like to explore here is one that we can perhaps learn the most from, and that is expressed in the Lakota phrase *mitakuye oyasin*--roughly translated as "we are all relatives," or "we are all a part of it." This idea of interconnectedness involves the immediate family reaching out to the clan, to the tribe, to the environment, and ultimately to the entire universe. Joseph Bruchac has written: "Native people understood that they had to live within the balance. When you are no longer part of it, the world goes out of balance." (*I Become Part of It*, 6) It's not difficult to see that many elements of life in the 1990's are out of balance, out of harmony--violence toward other human beings and toward the environment being at the top of the list in demonstrating this lack of accord. Many Indian myths I've read (one of the most important being the Navajo Creation Myth) stress that the health of the society depends on the health of every person within the community--that all members of the group are responsible for working toward the "healing" process. It's necessary to critically evaluate our society's emphasis on individualism, on competition and on personal gain to fully grasp this concept of interconnectedness. One can easily become "lost" along the way!

There's an old Indian saying: "The best way to learn is to forget who you are, where you're from. Empty your cup: when your cup is full you cannot gather any more information." Using these oversimplified examples from Indian culture and myth, I have tried to illustrate that one of the major justifications for a multicultural curriculum IS to become "lost," to forget who we are--so that we can in turn learn MORE about who we are! Thoreau echoes this philosophy in Chapter VIII of *Walden* when he writes: "Not till we are lost, in other words, not till we have lost the world, do we begin to find ourselves, and realize where we are and the infinite extent of our relations."

Benson (from page 7)

on others, keeping in mind that both process and attaining the desired outcome are important from the client perspective.

Nursing research continues to increase the knowledge base of culturally specific information, and it becomes more apparent that some of the recent approaches incorporated into nursing care in this country are not valued by other cultures. Self care, bonding a mother and baby, and women's decision-making preference are American perspectives which are unacceptable to some cultures. These approaches, if culturally incongruent, will not only jeopardize the nurse/ client relationship but may also lead to accusations of negligence or malpractice. The rights of the individual must be a primary consideration in providing care.

Some beliefs and practices, such as specific diets and religious needs, are quite apparent and are easily followed if assessed by nursing on admission. Some other values and customs are not obvious and, once a trusting relationship has been established, must be obtained by a gentle and careful conversation with the client about values and lifeways. This information, combined with nursing knowledge and insight,

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Blanchard (from page 2)

words, however, is that all bias is deliberate and this betrays either a simplistic view of history or else a very low regard for the craft and integrity of historians.

As the two sides to the debate draw their lines ever tighter, we on the sidelines should look for common ground.

As the two sides to the debate draw their lines ever tighter, we on the sidelines should look for common ground. And there is much to discover, just below everyone's dancing feet. When we spot it, we will likely be surprised that what results from our heated era will be squarely in the tradition of the university, a product of contrasting viewpoints and ultimately a new synthesis, a new paradigm. Larry Yarbrough of Middlebury College, writing in *CHANGE* (January/February 1992), helps us keep it all in perspective:

> .... the debate over the canon is not new. One can well imagine a teacher in Athens complaining: 'But if we have our pupils read all this Aristotle, we won't have enough time to deal with Plato. Let's stick to the classics'. And, indeed, Aristotle was not readily welcomed into the canon by the ancient Athenians -- and has been in and out of favor in the study of philosophy every since. The same can be said for any number of philosophers, artists, musicians, novelists, poets, and scientists. Tastes do change. What is important in one era will not be important in another.

Clearly, our era has experienced some rapid fire changes of taste. To fill out the picture, Yarbrough goes on to cite a ringing example of how choices may differ, depending on one's perspective. In 1916 and 1956, two lists were made of American prose classics. Over the course of forty years, tastes had so changed that only three titles were common to both. What is truly extraordinary about the lists is that they were not drawn up by scholars from different cultural camps. Rather, they were both drawn up by the same author, at different points in his life.

What is happening in the debates is what is supposed to happen. New perspectives are supposed to be invented and incorporated into knowledge production and transmission, and intellectual life is supposed to be rough and tumble.

Multiculturalism will eventually be absorbed into American higher education and into the fabric of our discipline-based knowledge system. What is happening in the debates is what is supposed to happen. New perspectives are supposed to be invented and incorporated into knowledge production and transmission, and intellectual life is supposed to be rough and tumble. Things happen to shake up our encapsulated thinking and we move on. That has been our way through five hundred years of university experience and it is our way today. The current dialectic will play itself out as its predecessors have, provided we preserve our penchant for independent thought and our tolerance for free expression. What is different in the present instance is merely the basis of the new perspectives (e.g. race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation), not the divergence from orthodoxy. Listen carefully and you can hear the echoes of Galileo's whisper, Strata Smith and Charles Darwin, and the voices of all manner of more recent revisionists. Many of them have moved us by miles. Let us hope that the current debates can muster more than mere inches.

Mariano (from page 8)

Reactionaries will continue to defend their world view and attack multiculturalism with the same venom used against the new ideas of Darwin. Multiculturalism holds the greatest possibility for developing critical thinkers, something the American school system sorely lacks and corporate America needs. The important issue is to respond and prepare for the coming diversity revolution. Minorities are here to stay and growing. Minorities are your neighbors, your customers, your students and your co-workers. They too are America.

Multiculturalism encourages the best in all of us. What we need now is the political will and the financial commitment to back it up.

Much ado has been made about "politically correct" language, mainly by critics against the multiculturalist concept of education. New concepts inspire lots of energetic ideas, sometimes extreme ones; it is a process of growth and evaluation, much like that which Women's Studies went through. The extremes of particularism (total ethnocentrism) and "politically correct" language are temporary issues that will evolve, change and adapt with the commitment of dedicated educators to the concept of multiculturalism. Remember Aesop's warning: "Beware lest you lose the substance by grasping at the shadow."

Multiculturalism encourages the best in all of us. What we need now is the political will and the financial commitment to back it up. We are all Americans, however new or old. Together we will all face a globally diverse future, either kicking and screaming, or preferably, well prepared with every means necessary. Just as we each cope with both a private and a public persona, so too can our society incorporate both the particularism of people and our commonality. Being different will not hurt us, but ignorance will.

Halligan (from page 1)

arship to make those alternative versions accessible. It is essential that the alternative narratives be read and heard. It is a matter of survival.

> Multicultural education provides the piercing glances, the alternative stories, and so acknowledges the forces which have made us.

The academic journey of both teachers and students is fraught with analogous narrative problems. Teachers are story tellers to some degree; they are narrators, selecting and editing, tailoring to the needs of the audience. Make no mistake, the selection of the narrative view significantly shapes attitudes and behaviors. The deliberate omission of one or more narrative views, one or more voices, distorts the meaning of the story. Is narrative intrinsically selective? Yes, but it must be just. As Marianne Moore writes in her poem, "When I Buy Pictures": "It comes to this: of whatever sort it is, /it must acknowledge the forces which have made it; /it must be lit with piercing glances into the life of things." Multicultural education provides the piercing glances, the alternative stories, and so acknowledges the forces which have made us.

Before we consider the narrative needs of the 20th Century reader, perhaps we can look at the needs of the 19th Century reader, in order to provide an historical parallel closer to our own time. Washington Irving's admiring portrait of Columbus fit the post-revolutionary nation's search for stability and conformity. Richard Hofstadter indicates in his book, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, that 19th Century white Americans disapproved of "rebelliousness, political or esthetic, against the existing order. Literature was to be a firm custodian of . . . conventional social morality" (402). Change, the ever present experience of those new Americans, was terrifying. Avoidance of change necessitated the rejection of the possibilities of the other, whether the other was the new immigrant, or the Native American, or the slave.

> Centuries of refusal to accept diversity, and the need to assert a monolithic world view, blinded the newcomers to the positive aspects of diversity.

Certainly this rejection of alternative experience is common to human behavior. Even in the 20th Century we cling to our own cultural boundaries. We may rail against those boundaries, but we still value them -- boundaries, borders, rituals -- the shape of familiar things. America's story is a story of relocation and dislocation, and so it also must be the story of the search for rootedness. The cross-fertilizations that did occur in language, custom, dress, and food were not comfortable ones. One narrative view won out; the other views were discarded, or more commonly, ignored.

Nineteenth Century Americans, in their search for stability and tradition, devised their Revolutionary narrative, their creation story. Like all creation stories, it is more the story of the narrators than the story of the creation, and, therefore, it is true but incomplete. Once upon a time a brave band of rebels heroically fought against the tyranny of the King, declaring their equality, and their rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Once more the narrative breaks down, because the rebels did not mean to include Women, Slaves, Indians, Africans, Asians, Latinos, Gays, Lesbians, or the Differently Abled. Centuries of refusal to accept diversity, and the need to assert a monolithic world view, blinded the newcomers to the positive aspects of diversity. That these positive aspects were implicit and explicit in the Declaration of Independence was not apparent to the creators of the document. Time brings paradigm shifts, changes in perspective. We now read the Declaration as obviously revolutionary in its insistence on individual freedoms. We ignore the gender specific language of the original; we overlook the reference to the "merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions." How noble; how modern; how perilous. In overlooking, in ignoring, the behaviors and attitudes of the past, we carry them into the present. We fail to see the "forces which have made us." We pretend that race, ethnicity, and gender are not "real" issues. We fail to see that they were "real" issues even when the Declaration was first written.

> We pretend that race, ethnicity, and gender are not "real" issues. We fail to see that they were "real" issues even when the Declaration was first written.

Toni Morrison addresses this failure to see clearly, this rejection of other narratives, in her book, *Playing in the Dark. Whiteness and the Literary Imagination.* "Freedom . . . can be relished more deeply in a cheek-by-jowl existence with the bound and unfree, the economically oppressed, the marginalized, the silenced" (64). Morrison suggests that indeed we have been dealing with these issues, by pretending not to deal with them. When Thomas Jefferson was composing the Declaration of Independence, that eloquent plea for the freedom of the individual, his meals were being served to him by one of his slaves. That human being is present in the document -- whether Jefferson the slave owner

(Continued on page 13)

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allows her to be there or not. Did he discuss one of the original drafts of the Declaration with Sally Hemings, his slave and his wife's half-sister. Did he read aloud the paragraph revealing his horror of the slave trade? His terror at the possibility of a Crown-financed slave uprising? We can only be sure of his moral discomfort, because we have access to the alternative drafts. Jefferson was advised to remove the offending paragraph. The incongruity between the demand for freedom and the reality of slavery was too much for the advisory committee to handle.

Jefferson was not alone in his discomfort. The founders and the citizens of the new nation had to willfully ignore the application of inalienable rights to the unfree. Was the creation story of American democracy too fragile to extend its democratic implications to the Africans and native peoples it should have logically included? Unfortunately, the narrative is more sinister than fragile because according to Morrison: "Nothing highlighted freedom . . . like slavery" (38). Later slaveholders even based their defense of slavery on a defense of freedom which could only be enjoyed by the privileged, deserving few. (Eugene Genovese elaborates on this argument in *The Slaveholder's Dilemma. Freedom and Progress in Southern Conservative Thought 1820-1860.*)

At the end of the 20th Century we cannot afford to "shellac" (to use Morrison's image), to seal and make permanent, to fix the classic texts, whether historical, literary, psychological, or scientific. Perhaps, that is what monocultural education attempts to do, and thus it paralyzes the academic community in its suggestion that there is only one way to look at the world, only one possible narrative view. Simonson and Walker, in their book *Multicultural Literacy*, suggest that: "As the world becomes more of a single . . . entity, there is a corresponding need for all citizens to have not only a fundamental understanding of the cultures of their own countries . . . but also a knowledge of the cultures of the rest of the world" (12).

> Students should be exposed to divergent voices: angry voices, patriarchal voices, feminist voices, rational voices, in order to critically engage their minds in the business of the world.

Serious scholarship cannot afford to shellac one narrative view. Scholarship must be inclusionary, or it risks being partial and inaccurate, lacking in what Charles Griswold, Jr. in his *Wilson Quarterly* article "Adam Smith, Conscience of Capitalism," calls moral imagination. Moral imagination, as explained in Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), stresses the need to see things from another's perspective. Adam Smith understood the necessity for an absence of bias (57) because he considered "factionalism and fanaticism [as] the great corrupters of civil peace and liberty" (58-59). Factionalism and fanaticism are alive and well in the 20th Century. They arise out of mutual misunderstanding. They can be countered by openness to other narratives, other voices. No classroom or school can expose every student to every story, but a global consciousness can be modeled. Students should be exposed to divergent voices: angry voices, patriarchal voices, feminist voices, rational voices, in order to critically engage their minds in the business of the world.

> Oppressed peoples tenaciously cling to their world views despite (or because of) the savagery of their overlords.

Michael Dorris, in his October 1979 *College English* essay, "Native American Literature in Ethnohistorical Context," personalized the question of multicultural education for me. "The Irish . . . represent the 'red Indians' of old Britain. Indeed the American reservation system derives in part from the English parliamentary debates over what to do with the 'wild Irish' . . ." (156). The "wild Irish" were a problem for the English in my mother's and father's day. My grandparents were the wild Irish. Cultural bias sowed the seeds of the 1916 Rising and led to Irish independence. Bias, ethnic hatred, created centuries of civil strife. Methodical suppression of the Irish language and culture was only partially successful. Oppressed peoples tenaciously cling to their world views despite (or because of) the savagery of their overlords. No dialogue was opened by the oppression of the Irish. Factionalism and fanaticism are the 20th Century results of the British insistence on one narrative view.

(A more contemporary example is the 90-year Communist grip on the Eastern bloc, which could not extinguish cultural, ethnic, and religious rivalries. Pax Sovietica, by insisting on one official story, kept a lid on the cauldron, but provided no avenue for mutual understanding.)

The experience of the Iroquois Nation is a closer geographical example of the negative effects of the imposition of one narrative view. This sovereign nation still exists despite the best efforts of our ancestors. Ron La France, director of American Indian Studies at Cornell, gave an erudite presentation on November 4th at BCC -- "The Iroquois: The Next 500 Years." He emphasized the vitality of Native Cultures in North America. La France described an early encounter between the Mohawks and the Europeans. "What manner of people are you?" asked the Mohawk Chief -- a civilized question in the best tradition of Western rational thinking. This question is in marked contrast to the European question at the 16th Century Valladolid conference, "Do Indians have souls?" The differences in perspec-

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tives could not be more astonishing. At least, the Mohawk Chief began with the possibility that the strangers were human. The Spanish question revealed the underlying assumption: that the Indians were so different that they could not be human. Their otherness was so striking that they had to be rejected. One narrative view prevailed.

Perhaps, we humans evolve at different speeds. We are still in process, bound by our own narratives -- comfortable with our own stories, resistant to other narrative views. Certainly all human beings need "pride of heritage and sense of history of their own people and of all the people who make up the mosaic of this great nation. African American[s] and Latino[s] and Asian American[s] and Native American[s] ... should know about European history and cultures, and white[s] ... should know about the history and cultures of diverse peoples of color with whom they share a city, a nation, and a world" (Edelman 73-74).

Our intellectual inheritance is not exclusively European, not solely rooted in the cultures of Greece and Rome -- cultures which themselves reflected the ethnic diversity of the Mediterranean and African experience. We need to learn from one another. Reginald Wilson's address to the American Council of Education, "Diversifying the Arts and Letters Curriculum," described the ingredients of a successful academic enterprise: "A rigorous academic program, high expectations, exacting standards, resources to overcome academic deficiencies, a continued reinforcement of success experiences, and dynamic pedagogy" (8). This is not a call for a watered-down curriculum. It is a call for serious scholarship, diversity of approach, openness to change -- a call for multicultural education.

The Greek-born Clement, who taught in 2nd Century Alexandria, said it clearly: "There is one river of truth but many streams fall into it on this side and that."

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Benson (from page 10)

will give the nurse direction to nursing care which complies with specific aspects of this client as well as provides sound care.

Thus careful assessment, mutual planning of nursing care, gentle questioning regarding preferences, and a continuous search for cultural information based on careful research is the ultimate challenge for nurses today. It is this focus which exemplifies the very essence of nursing-caring.

This Issue

This issue was edited by Roberta Williams, who joined the Writing Center and the English Department in 1987. Dr. Williams is the chairperson of the Task Force on Multicultural Education of the Global/Multicultural Perspectives Sub-Committee.

Upcoming Issues

The March issue of *Center Stage*, edited by Claire Ligeikis-Clayton, will focus on teaching and recognize the contributions of our peers. The April issue, edited by Marilyn Akins, will present faculty thoughts on Problem Solving. If you would like to share your thoughts on one of these topics, please contact the appropriate editor.

Articles are usually 500 words, but may be longer or shorter. Articles should be submitted to the Teaching Resource Center one to two months before publication. Electronic copies of articles are appreciated. Please contact the Teaching Resource Center for instructions and assistance.

Send correspondence and contributions to the publications manager:

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Center Stage

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Broome Community College – Binghamton, New York 13902

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This issue of *Center Stage* is a celebration - a celebration of the teaching and teachers at BCC. I was inspired to choose this topic when several of my colleagues and I were discussing how much we valued being a part of the BCC community. What makes BCC unique is the support, caring and nurturing atmosphere that not only colleagues, but also students enjoy. From administration to support staff to faculty, there is a camaraderie.

Last fall, in preparation for this *Center Stage* issue, I asked each of you to recognize the qualities that you admired in your colleagues. There were many responses that you will see throughout this issue, some brief and others long, all are published as anonymous comments. In addition to these anonymous comments, this issue includes: Dan Dodway's suggestions for interpreting student responses on examinations; the Academic All American essays of two BCC students, Janet Betts and Sharon Martin, who remind us in a powerful way of what brings us back to the college year after year; and my study of characteristics of excellent teachers.

I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to each and every one of us for making BCC the special place it is.

– Claire Ligeikis-Clayton, Editor

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In Celebration of Teachers

Claire Ligeikis-Clayton, Nursing

As an introduction to this edition of *Center Stage* I would like to highlight some of the qualities which I feel make us the Special Educators we are. I believe that while we are experts in our fields, it is not what we teach that leaves its impact on our students, it is who we are and what we are as role models.

Bender (1978) makes a distinction between educators as authority figures vs. helpers. As authority figures and experts we possess qualities of truth and skill. Going beyond these qualities, the helper exhibits qualities of democracy, encourages dialogue, strengthens weaknesses, discourages imitation and encourages unique meanings. As new teachers many of us feel we should provide the answers. As Garman (1982) points out, the educator's legacy is to be knowledgeable and skillful and yet have the courage not to know. I now see that education and life in general is a series of unanswered questions and problems. To provide students with answers is a disservice to them. To provide them with resources and to assist them in finding answers through their own inner resources is the best gift we as educators can give them.

> ...it is not what we teach that leaves its impact on our students, it is who we are...

I believe we at BCC possess the qualities of true helpers. I believe too, that most of us perceive ourselves as the facilitators of the process of learning rather than as authority figures. Bender supports this by observing that a helping leadership is not based on designated authority but by one's own sense of being and respect of himself/herself. When we respect ourselves and our abilities, it is more natural that our students will respect us as well.

Schon (1983) similarly contrasts authority figure vs. helper but uses the terms *expert* vs. *reflective practitioner*. He points out that the expert is supposed to know or claim to know all the answers regardless of his/her uncertainties. The reflective practitioner on the other hand, recognizes that he/she is not the only one who has relevant and important knowledge and admits the uncertainties. The reflective practitioner feels comfortable in telling students "I do not

(Continued on page 2)

Ligeikis-Clayton (from page 1)

know all the answers" and welcomes the knowledge of other individuals or will find the resources to obtain an answer for the group. In this way, we let students see us as human, not as the assumed expert in the ivory tower.

Williamson (1942) emphatically feels that the relationship that develops between educator/student will be a strong factor in the process of teaching/learning. In other words, how we relate to our students will in part determine their success. Bender (1978) writes that today's helper is usually a person with high idealism and a person with vision who has not yet come to terms with the power he/she possesses. It has taken me a long time to realize the impact we have on students. An article by Holden (1988) appraised that 38-48 percent of our nation's students would not graduate high school. The reaffirming portion of the article stated that despite the baggage and burdens our children carry, students in a certain school district were achieving higher test scores and improving steadily. Much of this success was attributed to the fact that teachers and staff believed in their students' ability to succeed. We at BCC certainly emulate this perception of our students.

He looked at people as constant sources of growth ... as human beings with potential.

I believe Sacks (1987) presents a perfect example of the true helper. The qualities Sacks possessed - personal, active listener, observer, risk taker, open, willing to learn, not all knowledgeable, didn't give up, questioning, empathetic - allowed him to see that the most important aspects we should learn about our fellow human beings are hidden from us because of their simplicity and familiarity. He saw in people what others could not see. He looked at people as constant sources of growth and looked upon people who were seen as objects, case studies or freaks, as human beings with potential. Flynn (1980) states that one who is real and genuine has empathic understanding and who most importantly has an unconditional positive regard for the human soul. I firmly believe that those of us in the BCC community demonstrate to our students that their development as human beings is as important (if not more important) as their cognitive abilities. I further believe there is a direct correlation between perceived ability and actual ability. When our students believe in themselves and their abilities, their performance becomes heightened.

Garman (1982) states that who the teacher is personally affects what he/she does and what pupils do. I can proudly say according to my observations here at BCC that we are role models for what we believe. Garman points out that individuals don't have ethics, they do ethics. There is no greater reward for us than when our students can say teasingly, "When I grow up, I want to be just like you."

When I ask students what it is specifically what they want to emulate in those individuals who are their heroes, they have difficulty verbalizing or measuring quantitatively. In talking with them, however, they focus on who the educator is as a person. It is our own sense of being which radiates and contagiously spreads to those students we have the privilege of working with. Garman has addressed this by saying that genuine collegiality occurs when we can become connected with others. I believe that this spirit of connectedness has a great impact on our ability to assist our students in their journey. I further believe we here at BCC have the connectedness with our students and with each other.

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Kudos for Our Colleagues

A Collection of Anonymous Comments

Lynn Balunas (Counseling Center): Clearly represents the sensitivity and inter-personal insight which makes student survival at the college level into part of a meaningful growth process.

Joan Bandurchin-Pierog (Office Technologies): Manifests the professional standards to which her students aspire.

Eric Beamish and Linda Mapes (Institutional Research): For their willingness and help in assisting us with our reports, grants, etc. by providing us with their endless bank of stats--and always cheerfully.

Alan Bennett (Counseling Center): For his encouragement, availability and sensitivity in helping bridge the gap with culturally diverse student populations.

Marlene Benson (Nursing): For her tireless enthusiasm and idealism--not only does Marlene give her all in her assigned workload, but successfully developed, implemented and supervised the Nursing Refresher course for the benefit of nurses in our community.

Bryan Blanchard (Academic Affairs): For his constant support to our department. He has consistently given us immediate attention when we needed it, helped us problem solve and supported us with respect of the professionals we are.

I would like to honor several different colleagues on these pages. First, a tribute to all the faculty who have served over twenty years and still care enough to be involved, serving on committees, chairing departments, running the academic side of the college. I hope the group coming up will be ready to replace them in the next five years.

My second group of colleagues are those who work in my department from the professors to the adjunct instructors. These folks are always quick to volunteer to provide extra help for students, to revise curriculum, to plan department social events, and to attend college functions.

I am pleased to be able to write these words honoring my colleagues. Perhaps you can find yourself on this honor roll.

Bryan Blanchard (Academic Affairs): For his intelligence, integrity and commitment to education.

Jim Boyden (Humanities): Jim has a legion of students who have admired his stimulating approach to philosophy and his patience to their needs. His consideration has also extended to his colleagues for whom he is always ready to share ideas or edit their writing.

Nancy Button (Radiologic Technology): For dedicated and unselfish attention to the needs of her staff, students and many of us in the campus community.

Jane Colapietro (Mathematics): A caring and knowledgeable instructor to her students. A delightful conversationalist to her peers.

Counseling Center: For being available to us and our students when the need arises.

Charlie Croll (Social Science): Clear, fair, innovative integrates general education principles. Teaches study skills, gives appropriate control to students.

Janet Denman (Nursing): For her student advocacy.

Margaret Deys (Writing Center/English): She has more integrity as a teacher than almost anyone else I know; her honesty, sincerity, and dedication to her ideals have always been an inspiration to me.

Lorenz Firsching (History/Social Science): Extensive background & resources in his field, especially World War II. Working with limited funding and a very small department to teach history to very many, and simultaneously switch over to more multicultural view.

Paulette Gannett (Computer Studies): If you would like a lesson on effectively using humor in the classroom, ask Paulette if you can observe her class. Paulette uses laughter to lighten up the class or make a point. She's funny, yet known among students for being a demanding, but fair, instructor. Much thought and planning goes into her lessons, she determines what she wants to get across to her students and then develops examples and exercises that are relevant, memorable and enjoyable.

Douglas Garnar (History/Social Science): I really appreciate Doug Garnar's efforts to provide a forum for discussing important global and national events on this campus. He has organized many faculty presentations for the Campus Community on timely topics such as the Gulf war and the Hill-Thomas hearings. Doug invests a lot of his personal time organizing these events and bringing them to us. We are richer for it. Thanks Doug.

(Continued on page 4)

Kudos (from page 3)

Joseph Gay (Health Sciences): For his ability through his years at BCC to nurture and support our students. Joe doesn't lose sight of the fact that students are our number one priority.

Mary Gaugler (Nursing): For her patience with students. In all the years I have worked with her I have never seen her lose this patience and maintains a positive regard with all students to whom she comes in contact with.

Barbara Gerschwender (English): An enthusiastic and caring professional. Her students learn to question accepted stereotypes and modify their philosophies of life in constructive ways

Mort Goldberg (Mathematics): For his "take the bull by the horns" nature in getting things done. He facilitates change and follows through in assuring implementation of these changes.

Maureen Hankin (Dental Hygiene): Maureen has a tremendous integrity that shows in her committee work. I am sure that quality is apparent to her students and that they seek to emulate this trait as they enter their profession.

George Higginbottom (Liberal Art and Related Careers): When we all feel stressed at registration time, it might help us all to think of George and the number of students he is responsible for. Watch him at registration too-he is calm and respectful of the student despite the tremendous pressure.

Jane Hlopko (Medical Records Technology): I've heard through the grapevine from students that you are one of the health science favorites. When asked what makes you so special students respond, "her caring, kindness and making learning fun."

Wanda Johnston and her staff (Learning Resource Center): "A ball of fire!" The changes taking place in the library are great. We also appreciate your seeking the college community input for our needs.

Ben Kasper (Social Sciences): For his efforts in conducting Community Education workshops, co-chairing general education committee on community education, his concern in the classroom for his students: he is simply a "teacher's teacher."

Liz Klipsch (Mathematics): Possess an excellent blend and mastery of the interrelating venues of both quantity and quality.

Claire Ligeikis-Clayton (Nursing): Brings creativity and strength so needed by students in nursing, who might otherwise be overwhelmed by the demands and vagaries of their desired profession.

Barbara Marckx (Nursing): A faculty member who has served as a role model for me is indeed, a highly motivated woman. She constantly challenges herself intellectually and physically. Barbara is presently earning her second masters degree from Syracuse University and recently completed the stringent requirements to become a member of the Ski Patrol at Greek Peak. Her most important attribute however, is her ability to be a friend. She cares deeply about people, including her family, students and peers, her community and her church. Barbara has encouraged and inspired me in so many ways.

Alice McNeely (Teaching Resource Center/Computer Studies): For devoted and exemplary service to, and on behalf of, faculty. Your professionalism and the grace and aplomb with which you perform your functions is deserving of recognition and thanks for the example which you set.

Mary More (Nursing): For her helpfulness to new faculty, and her objective and analytical contributions to group problem solving.

Steve Natale and his staff (Learning Assistance Center): What would we do without you? With increasing needs of our students in remedial courses, writing skills in our "W" courses, math skills, test taking anxiety and strategies. So many services that a majority of our students use. What would we do without you?

Nursing Department: Thanks for your support when I was in need. Thanks for listening when I tried to share. Thanks for not personalizing our professional differences in opinion. Thanks for the acceptance of a new idea. Thanks for looking forward. Thanks for a willingness to change. Thanks for your acceptance of individuals. Thanks for the humor. Thanks to a great group.

Paul O'Heron (Mathematics): I would like to thank Paul for providing the inspiration and management that led to the development of this publication. Paul has always been a doer. His contribution of many personal hours began a wonderful tradition. Thank you.

Michelle Perricone (Publications Center): Helpful, thoughtful, patient and pleasant come to mind when I think of my professional encounters with Michele Perricone. No matter how busy she is, she always manages to give us her full attention.

Elliot Reitz (Biology): For his excellence in teaching. If you've never had the pleasure of witnessing one of his

(Continued on page 5)

Kudos (from page 4)

classes, treat yourself. Elliot uses beautiful diagrams which stay imprinted for years and conceptualizes his material. He also has a unique testing style of questioning which helps students critical thinking skills. Ask Elliot for a sample of his "more than, less than, same as" questions!

Margherita Rossi (Psychology): For inspiring her students; for non-confrontational, but insightful peer discussions; for the willingness to advance studies in women's psychological and social development; for being a very nice human being.

Dick Romano (Economics): For his avid interest in involving BCC in culturally diverse experiences. You have provided staff and students with opportunities which have been life long educational treasures.

Deborah Spanfelner (Library) : Conscientious and helpful, concerned about colleagues and students.

Richard Stoner (English): Dick is extremely helpful to all of his colleagues - especially new staff in the English Department. His sense of humor, gourmet taste, and concern for the student's educational achievements are a delight to all who know him.

David Sterling (Biology): For helping to enhance the beautification of the campus with landscaping and flower beds.

Dave Sterling (Biology): High honors for years of initiative, energy, and creativity demonstrated by the beautiful floral displays he creates for the LRC/Library Circulation area.

Ralph Walter and the Maintenance Crew : Dedicated and professional work. From the day maintenance to the often taken for granted night custodial crew. "Day in -Night in" a job the campus can be proud of!

Pat Weller (Humanities): Over many years, Pat has stimulated and encouraged sometimes shy and inarticulate students to expand more than they thought possible; they surprise and please themselves by meeting her exacting standards.

Roberta Williams (Learning Assistance Center): She is always willing to help students or colleagues with any academic issue. When instructing, she employs a gentle style that guides the learner while building upon and enhancing the learner's self-esteem. Roberta goes even further than this. She does not limit herself to academic issues, but stands ready to assist students with problems whenever necessary. I admire her dedication and commitment to helping students achieve academic and personal success.

Barcoders: Accolades to our colleagues, students and friends who participated in the Learning Resources Center Barcoding Project. Through their help, the project was completed far faster than anticipated and the cooperative community spirit that prevailed turned the tedious project into a social event.

Mohammed Adem
Michael Ballog
Erico Benovente
Bob Betts
Kathy Blanchard
Marge Bromley
Theresa Cahorshak
Caroline Decker
Janet Denman
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Marion Forbes
Liya Girma
Hao vu
Adrian Hernandez
Roxanne Hoyle
Larry Jenkins
Kai Ketchen
Cyndi Knapp
Frank Kollar
Maria Lander
Tung Le
Annette LeRoy
Jonathan Lichstein
Catia Lopez
Natalie Marongelli
Frank Maxwell
Bill Metzar
Rodolfo Molina
Mai Nguyen
Ismael Omer
Helen Petrochko
Anne Pilotti
Michael Prostakov
Jane Rawoof
Peg Relyea
Ann Repasky
Doug Rittenhouse
Harvey Roehl
Sharon Scism
Greg Sliwa
Ann Sova
Christian Sterling
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Samson Mesfin
Shirley Miles
Loan Nguyen
Kelly O'Connor
Michelle Perricone
Florence Piech
Karen Pitcher
Cathie Quinn
James Ray
Dick Remizowski
Ina Mae Rich
Alex Riveroi
Lisa Sanchez
Irwin Simser
Suzanne Smith
Debbie Spanfelner
Dick Stoner
Huynh Truong
Jo VanWely
Greta Wingate
Laurie York

(Continued on page 6)

Evaluation Suggestions

Dan Dodway, Mathemetics

> *"If you can both listen to children and accept their answers not as things to just be judged right or wrong but as pieces of information which may reveal what the child is thinking you will have taken a giant step toward becoming a master teacher rather than merely a disseminator of information."*
>
> *J. A. Easley, Jr. & R. E. Zwoyer(1975)*

Interpreting student responses is a blend of art and science. The analysis of answers to questions has far reaching applications and implications.

Adding a perceptual dimension can provide a quick and easy modification which will *more than double the power of your testing with only a slight increase in time.* This technique will work in any discipline, increase the critical thinking utilized by the student, encourage the student to check each answer, and provide a reality check for both the teacher and the student as to how well something is learned.

In its simplest form all that is required is to ask the student to assess each answer in one of three ways. That is, respond to the additional question: "Do you think your answer is right?" Answer with "yes", "no", or "maybe." This takes very little extra space or time, but adds a new dimension to the interpretation of the results.

Now instead of simply knowing if an answer is right or wrong, we can assess how well it is known, and pinpoint the most troublesome of errors in which students wrongly believe that they are correct. Unless they are confronted with counter examples to what they believe to be correct, they will have no motivation to revise their knowledge base. Further, these misconceptions tend to be tenacious and future learning may be compromised if built on a weak foundation.

A follow up activity, incorporating the principles of writing across the curriculum, is to have the students write their reason(s) for thinking an answer was right but was not.

This may focus on a major problem or something as simple as a "careless" error. With many cases of "careless error," it should become clear to the student that there is real value in checking the answer.

Some students are reluctant to check their test because they believe the myth that the first response is always best. Certainly if an answer is nothing but a guess, there is no point in changing it. However, if there is any reason to change it (such as "seeing the mistake"), there is actual research which substantiates the obvious--change the answer.

Although "careless" errors are a nuisance, the real problem domain remains unfounded confidence in misconceived ideas. Once identified these can be addressed by both the student and the teacher. Without assessing confidence these might not have been discovered.

It is even helpful to determine what students know they do not know. This is a form of knowledge made famous by Socrates, recorded by history as the wisest man in the world, who knew that he knew nothing. Neither did anyone else, but they lacked that one piece of knowledge which he possessed.

A less serious error, but an error, none the less, is believing something is wrong when it is not. This process illuminates such misconceptions. They too need work or the material is not truly mastered, and will not be consistently utilized correctly. This may highlight problems in low self-esteem or an insecurity in a subject area.

Some multiple choice tests try to compensate for this possibility by penalizing, based on a percentage of wrong answers, as if some correct answers were nothing more than lucky guesses. This practice, though widespread, is questionable at best, since many wrong answers are not the result of guessing, but of believing incorrectly that the material is understood. Penalizing in this fashion is totally inappropriate unless the student has a chance of guessing the answer. The practice merits a "maybe" on multiple choice tests, but a "no way" on any other kind of test.

Assessing confidence in the answers provides many advantages. An evaluative question represents a higher order of thinking than recalling facts or demonstrating skills. It enables teacher and student to categorize an answer in the perceptual dimension with a basis for a reality check. This dimension can be added to all tests. It is especially useful in lower level courses or with weaker students since the impact on later learning is greatest at that stage. ◻

Kudos (from page 5)

Dolores Wolcott (Cafeteria): Dolores, as well as the rest of the staff in the cafeteria, is a real asset to our campus. She exudes friendliness and efficiency and contributes to the campus atmosphere that welcomes and nurtures our students and our staff.

Angelo Zuccolo (Theatre): For his positive nature and so needed sense of humor. ◻

Through the Eyes of a Student

Sharon G. Martin

My most outstanding experience thus far at Broome Community College was a summer course in Human Biology presented by Professor Dave Walsh. Professor Walsh, who has received awards and recognition for his teaching prowess, is obviously fascinated by his subject and quite easily transfers his enthusiasm to his students. I consider myself very fortunate to have been in one of his classes. He was truly the coalescing factor for my belief that learning can and should be an enjoyable experience.

During our series of lectures, Professor Walsh took apart the human body, system by system, bone by bone, then put it all back together for us into one incredibly interrelated whole.

During lab he gave us just enough information and hints to get us started. He taught us how to learn, allowed us to fill in the gaps, and answer our own questions. Yet, he was always there to heed the cries for help if we became overwhelmed. Needless to say, a wonderful camaraderie developed between students and professor.

His suggestion that it would be beneficial to get together in study groups was the start of an incredible educational blitz. I found myself gravitating toward the students who were equally excited about the curriculum. Together, we turned the learning center into our base of operations. We took turns talking each other through complicated body processes, exchanging discoveries along the way. Alternating catnaps on the library couch, coaxing each other awake with caffeine, we quite often studied through the evening.

Our study of the muscular system was reminiscent of body builders as we flexed our way to enlightenment trying to discover the general location and action of particular groups.

There is one particular episode that stands out in my mind. In preparation for our lab test on the skeletal system we had taken our "box of bones" into one of the study rooms at the learning center. Holding up individual bones, we quizzed each other on names, position and placement, inventing rhymes and jingles as we went along. As more and more of our classmates drifted in, they became infected by our study method. Pretty soon the room was packed with people holding up bones, laughing and singing. Motivated? Absolutely. (I could not help but smile as I heard people humming jingles during the exam).

I cannot remember ever being so close to one group of people. Our lives that summer totally centered around lecture, lab and the learning center. Although I was aware that summer course were condensed and very intense, nothing could have prepared me for this total "biological immersion". I floated through the summer surrounded by microscopes, boxes of bones and models of the heart, eye and ear. I had lived, ate and slept anatomy and physiology. It became an inherent part of my being.

At the end, after final exams, we found ourselves in the learning center, not quite sure what to do. The course was over, but it had been the most glorious summer vacation I had ever experienced.

A Personal Window

Janet E. Betts

College business majors expect to learn the intricacies of accounting, marketing, and techniques of management; they don't expect their lives to be transformed by a basic English course.

The assignment was simple enough: start a personal journal and add to it each day. Write what you think about, care about, and worry about. For me, it was very difficult to pry out dashed hopes, frustrations, past errors, hurts, and sorrows and expose them to the public.

I was ordered to stop trying to form perfect sentences or use correct punctuation. I was told to let it all out and the editing could be done later.

Amid the pages, most of them blurred from tears, I worked through the sorrow and rage of my daughter's death; the fury at a medical system that decided she wasn't faking it — three months after she died; the despair from observing leaders who will not lead; the frustration of trying to make a difference and seeing how pitifully small the contribution is against the enormity of what needs to be done.

From this journal and the personal struggle it required, I found pockets of prejudice I didn't know I had and I discovered that I was living most of my life in regret for what might have been. I learned that I cannot change the past, I cannot say what I wish I had said to my daughter...it is too late. I have only tomorrow to make the best use of what I've learned today. I learned that I can transform adversity into inspiration.

I found my voice and the courage to use it ... because a teacher believed in drawing out the best in her students and knew how to do it.

And perhaps most important of all, I learned from my classmates that we all share a dream.

We want to be free. We want to grow. We want to matter.

(This article is a tribute to Vaun Angeline.)

Teaching Heros

by Anonymous

With so many faculty deserving of praise and emulation, whom should one single out? That is the principal challenge of this month's theme. The anecdotes that follow will accordingly honor people who embody inspiring qualities - nobility of purpose, depth of commitment--which characterize a great many teachers at BCC. All of the "heroes" employ student-centered approaches to teaching and learning. In their daily lives at the College, they exert gigantic effort; they willingly sacrifice energy and time. They show, in all that they do, a profound concern for the intellectual and personal growth of our students.

> All of the "heroes" employ student-centered approaches to teaching and learning.

Margaret Deys is among those with talent of "heroic" proportions for helping students develop as independent learners. A colleague recalls an especially striking example. Once, while Margaret was away at a conference, the other teacher "stood in" with a freshman composition class as the students composed first drafts in one of the computer labs. As the "substitute" took attendance, the students went straight to work, politely stopping to listen when she made a few announcements for Margaret. Then the teacher circulated in the room looking at the students' writing, occasionally answering a question or offering a suggestion. She soon realized that they didn't need her; in the absence of authority, they would have worked steadily and as productively.

Many faculty go to extraordinary lengths to create a learning environment in which students will feel "safe" to express their opinions; Harold Koster is an outstanding case in point. A student tells of a particular discussion about the welfare system in a class Hal taught several semesters ago. Some of the student's classmates made what she knew to be ignorant remarks about welfare mothers. A welfare mother herself, she was embarrassed by the comments but forced herself to speak up. Unfortunately, someone interrupted her, however, and then others ignored her as they began to again invoke the myths. She would have remained silent after that, she said, but Hal intervened, urging her on: "Tell them, Charlene." The student said it helped tremendously that her professor thought she had something important to say. In preventing the majority from silencing the one whose perspective was different, Hal not only encouraged that student but also gave others a second chance to hear and consider an unfamiliar viewpoint. And Hal's handling of the incident might have also increased the likelihood that more students would communicate unusual or unpopular ideas.

Of the teachers who give unselfishly of their limited time, none could be more generous than Dick Stoner. One person twice saw Dick stop in his tracks to read papers after students had asked for appointments. On each occasion, Dick was hurrying from one area of the campus to another when a student approached him to say something like, "I wish you would read the most recent draft of my paper and tell me what you think of it. Can I make an appointment?" Both times Dick said, "I'll read it right now." And, having set his briefcase down on the pavement, he offered an instant, outdoor conference. Obviously he thought his students and their papers were more important than whatever he had planned to do elsewhere.

Encouraging independence of thought and behavior on the part of one's students, fostering a climate which invites the students to take risks, devoting "extra" portions of one's already scarce time to helping the students; these acts typify the caring attitude of many--perhaps most--of our colleagues. None of three teachers knew that somebody was "watching." But people do see. More importantly, the students will never forget.

This Issue

This issue was edited by Claire Ligeikis-Clayton. Claire joined the Nursing department at Broome Community College in 1982 and became department chair in 1990.

Upcoming Issues

The April issue of Center Stage, edited by Marilyn Akins, will present faculty thoughts on Problem Solving. The May issue will focus on Civic Education and will be edited by Ben Kasper. If you would like to share your thoughts on one of these topics, please contact the appropriate editor.

Articles are usually 500 words, but may be longer or shorter. Articles should be submitted to the Teaching Resource Center one to two months before publication. Electronic copies of articles are appreciated. Please contact the Teaching Resource Center for instructions and assistance.

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Center Stage

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"Human problem-solving behavior is extraordinarily rich, complex, and fascinating - and we only understand very little of it" (Schoenfeld). This month's issue of *Center Stage* looks at some of the facets of this rich and complex behavior.

Members of the faculty look at many aspects of problem-solving. Dan and Joan Dodway discuss some of the false beliefs people (not only students) have about problem-solving and give some suggestions on how to overcome these beliefs. I examine some ideas about general problem-solving skills and explain 222how I encourage physics students to develop these skills. Denise Abrams explains how she teaches problem-solving to her physical therapist students by allowing them to solve problems. Karen Goodman gives some ideas about using cooperative learning as a problem-solving activity. Finally, Anne Blakeslee and Penny Corino give us their thoughts on why teaching problem-solving is important. Anne's article is from the viewpoint of service management philosophy and Penny's article discusses the reasoning behind Tech-Prep philosophy and its approach to problem-solving.

I hope your enjoy the issue. Thank you to everyone who contributed.

--Marilyn Akins, Editor

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Problem Solving Myths

Dan Dodway, Mathematics Department and
Joan Dodway, Deposit Central Schools

There are many false beliefs held with respect to problem solving in general and solving math problems in particular. These myths discourage many from to even attempting to solve a problem.

Myth #1: Problems are obstacles that make life difficult.

There may be some validity to this statement, but problems can also be regarded as challenges and opportunities. Cases abound where an apparent failure was a success when viewed from a different perspective. For example, of what use is a glue that does not stick very well? Now we have Post It Notes.

Classroom suggestion: Encourage a positive attitude. View mistakes as a good start which may perhaps solve a different problem or provide some insight into the problem. In brain storming be non-judgmental. It may be the most outlandish suggestion which leads to the best solution. Fear of being wrong keeps some people from trying to solve problems. This can be alleviated in class by pointing out the value of all suggestions.

Myth #2: "Microwave Syndrome": If I can't solve the problem quickly, it is not possible to solve, or even if I can, it is not worth the time it would require.

While it is true that many of the more interesting problems take more than a few minutes to solve, it does not mean that a problem cannot be solved simply because the solution is not immediately obvious. Caution: Half the things that are obvious may not even be true. Developing problem solving strategies may help.

One useful strategy is to reduce one big problem down to several smaller problems or consider a simplified version of the original problem. That is, reduce the problem we can't solve to one that we can solve. Then make use of what we have learned to answer the original question.

Classroom suggestion: When presenting solutions in class, do not simply present answers in the most efficient form. Let students see the thinking process. Purposely branch into some paths which may not lead to a solution right

(Continued on page 2)

Dodway (from page 1)

away if at all. It is important for students to realize that solving novel problems may require traveling into some dead ends. Although the first approach may not work, there is no reason to give up on the problem. Back up and try another path that looks promising or at least possible. Some teachers intentionally do not look at the exercises assigned until class time so that the students can observe the problem solving process and not simply a presentation of the answer. Give more time, perhaps a week, for some problems before giving the answers. Examine student work to confirm that an attempt has been made. Provide suggestions without giving the whole answer. Give students the opportunity to compare and share ideas with one another in small (size two to four) cooperative groups. Encourage them to help, question, and check one another. The best way to learn something is to teach it. Be concerned about developing student problem solving skills as well as teaching the material. Chinese proverb: Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.

Myth #3: There is only one solution to a problem.

Most problems have multiple solutions. Some are judged better than others if they are shorter, but different solutions may have greater value if they can be applied to more difficult problems for which the shorter (more elegant) solution won't work.

Some problems actually have no solution. In mathematics the next best thing to solving a problem is proving that no one else can solve it either. For example, it can be shown by Galois theory that there is no general algebraic solution for an equation of degree five. This is interesting in that a high school student can solve any equation of degree two in seconds, and with some work college students can solve equations of degree three or four. However, not even the most brilliant mathematician with the most powerful computer can solve exactly a general equation of degree five.

Another useful problem solving strategy is thinking backwards. For example, consider the puzzle:

Your father gives half the money in his pocket to your mother, a fourth of what is left to your brother, and a third of what is then left to your sister. He then splits the remainder with you. If you get two dollars, how much did your father have at the beginning?

Algebraically, this might be solved by starting with letting x equal the amount in the beginning, and working out the details. This will work, but an even easier way does not require algebra. The solution will become clear if you work backwards starting with the fact that you have two dollars.

Another strategy that may prove useful is not thinking simply forward or backward, but thinking in terms of a network. Often concepts have multiple relationships which cannot, by their nature, be linked linearly. Here a direct straight line type of thinking may be inefficient or inadequate. There is an entertaining small book called Flatland about a society living in a two dimensional universe. There are many wonders a three dimensional visitor was able to share. If a problem has an added dimension, it may require a more creative, divergent, network-like, even intuitive type of thinking than simply exists along a straight line.

Classroom suggestion: Solicit various ways of solving problems from the class. Besides seeing the variety of methods possible, students will build a repertoire of techniques which will equip them with more ways of approaching future problems. With a larger "bag of tricks" they will have more directions to go when encountering dead ends.

Myth #4: A problem is no longer interesting if it has been solved by someone.

The value and often joy of a problem is in working through or discovering the process which leads to a solution. An example of a classic problem is adding the counting numbers from one to one hundred. With a calculator this may only take a few minutes but it is not a good way to add the numbers from one to one million. Although there are many ways of solving this problem, Gauss provided a clever way of viewing it.

To examine his strategy let us consider the easier task of adding the numbers from one to ten. Instead of adding in a straight line approach of one plus two plus three etc., let us add in such a way that the partial sums are equal. Namely, add one plus ten and two plus nine and three plus eight and four plus seven and five plus six. This results in five pairs of numbers each adding to eleven for a result of 55. In the same way the numbers from one to one hundred yield fifty pairs of sums of 101 for a total of 5050.

This myth has no more substance than the view that there is no reason to visit a scenic spot simply because someone else has been there. For the ardent explorer, the ultimate high is being the first to visit a new land. For the problem solver, there is a comparable high for being the first to solve a problem. For some, there is equal satisfaction in being able to pose a good problem.

Classroom suggestion: Place value on alternative solutions and the insights they can provide. There are many ways of going from point A to point B. Sometimes taking the scenic route has as much value as reaching the destination. Bill Sargeant in the BCC math department cautions that many students respond with "Don't confuse me with details; I don't want to think. Just show me how to do it." This

(Continued on page 8)

Useful Problem-Solving Characteristics

Marilyn Akins, Engineering Science

In dealing with problem-solving in my physics courses, I had three major concerns:

1) How could I help my students learn to solve standard introductory physics problems?
2) Since the students in my classes are not physics majors (and often not even science majors), what problem-solving skills would be useful to them in other subjects?
3) How could I encourage the students to transfer the problem-solving techniques learned in physics classes to other classes?

To answer these concerns, I turned to the literature on problem-solving and found many interesting ideas.

One difficulty in looking at problem-solving is its definition. There was little consensus on what a problem was. I lean toward the definitions that make a problem something that needs more than memorization to solve, something that involved thinking about relationships among different concepts and applications of ideas to novel situations.

I then searched for the general characteristics I felt were needed in solving physics problems but could also be used in general problem-solving. I found many characteristics of problem-solving and decided on five I thought addressed my concerns. The five were: understanding the problem, using heuristics to aid in solving the problem, developing a knowledge base, use of principles vs. surface features and evaluating the solution of the problem. Most of these come from the research on novice vs. expert problem-solving. Although I am not trying to make my students physics experts, I think the research gives some good ideas about general problem-solving skills the students can strive for. The rest of this article briefly discusses what these characteristics involve and the kinds of activities I try to encourage in my physics classes.

Understanding the problem:

Some people call this creating the "internal problem space" (Smith) or re-representing the problem in the student's own terms. The students need to know what the problem is asking as well as actually understanding the words involved. In physics, sketching the situation depicted in the problem is always important. Some problems will need certain types of sketches: in physics, students often need free body diagrams; in genetics, gene tables are often needed. The diagram is one way to identify the information given in the problem but needs to become more than that. It also needs to help students identify the principles that will be needed to solve the problem.

Another part of understanding the problem is connecting the English phrases in the problem to the physical situation that is represented. Students also have to make sure they pick up any information implied in the problem. In a motion problem, for instance, "at rest" means the velocity is zero. Another example is the acceleration in a free fall problem, it will be the acceleration due to gravity.

To encourage students to sketch diagrams, I do not give full credit for a problem if the diagram is not present (and one was needed). I also make sure their practice problems and graded problems have information that is implied and not just explicitly given.

Use of heuristics:

Heuristics is another term that is hard to define. I like Schoenfeld's definition of heuristics - "rules of thumb for making progress on difficult problems." Some heuristics may be general problem-solving aids. These would include such techniques as trial and error, reasoning by analogy, and backward or forward reasoning (Smith). Others may be subject-specific heuristics.

Two heuristics that I find most useful to physics students (and I think to others) are breaking a complex problem into smaller parts and equation matching (backward reasoning). In breaking the problem up into smaller parts, I try to encourage the students to see this as a natural part of the overall picture in solving the problem and not as a step in desperation when they can't make any progress on the problem. By equation matching, I mean looking at the information given in a problem, looking at what is asked for and finding an equation that has only those things in it. This is considered to be novice behavior. The expert-like alternative is thinking about the principle that ties the information together and then choosing the equation that represents that principle.

> In breaking the problem up into smaller parts, I try to encourage the students to see this as a natural part of the overall picture in solving the problem and not as a step in desperation…

In solving example problems, I always try to have students identify the principle involved in the problem and then come up with an equation to use. I also give them ideas for efficient equation matching in situations where multiple equations are related to a given principle (for example in kinematics). I also always give students some multiple step problems, where one equation is not going to be sufficient to solve the problem.

Evaluation:

Most textbooks tell the students to "check their answers," but few actually tell them what to look for. Most

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Problem Solving: Tech-Prep Style

Penny Corino, Tech-Prep

Most of the time we see problems as barriers. They are sources of inconvenience and annoyance. They get in our way and seem to prevent us from having happy and productive lives. In reality, problems can serve a purpose. Problems can be opportunities to participate.

Problems stimulate us and move us forward. Consider for a moment two (2) students attempting to solve the same math problem. You know the one, if a train leaves Chicago... Student A is in class while the teacher is reading the problem to the class but student B is in the hallway outside his classroom with a stop watch, meter stick and a battery operated train. Which student would you say has a better chance of remembering the experience, retaining the exercise, and being able to relate the outcome to life and work?

When problems are seen this way the goal is not the elimination of the problem or even the solution, but the creation of a process and a reasoning behind the process.

> *Learning is not a task or a problem-it is a way*
> *to be in the world. Man learns as he pursues*
> *goals and projects that have meaning for him.*
> *Sidney Jourard*

Problems seem to follow the same law of physics that gases do. They seem to fill what ever space is available. Therefore, sometimes the solution of a problem or the elimination of a problem means creating new problems or finding bigger ones.

For example:

If your only problem for the day is to write a follow up letter to a job interview, you may spend your entire day finding the paper and pen, thinking about what you will write, writing the letter, going to the Post Office and then thinking about all the things you should have said. If, on that same day, you need to go grocery shopping, the problem of the letter will shrink to make room. If you also want to buy a new car, it is amazing how quickly and easily you can complete the grocery shopping and the letter.

One way to solve problems is to find bigger ones...

Our nation is in a down turn industrially. We are losing our competitive edge. Japan, Germany and many others are not even concerning themselves with us. Dollar for dollar our products are insufficient. And soon, combined financial forces of European countries may claim our largest nation status.

As the United States shifts from an industrial society to an information society, technology is upgrading the work required in most jobs. In order to prepare a workforce for the year 2000, these facts must be considered:

- job growth will be fast mainly in high skill occupations;
- most jobs will require workers who have solid science, math and communication skills, but fewer than one in four new employees will be able to function at the needed level;
- the types of skills necessary to implement the new computer-based technologies requires workers to develop broader skills in order to understand the overall process of production needed for a whole systems approach to manufacturing;
- the number of skilled workers versus unskilled workers in industry has increased from one skilled worker for every eight in the 1940s to one skilled worker for every four unskilled in 1983;
- the U.S. Department of Labor statistics indicates that eighteen of the twenty fastest growing occupations will require some type of technical training beyond high school but will not require a baccalaureate degree.

As demands for a more educated, highly skilled workforce increase, the dropout rate in this country remains high. Statistics show that of the 44 million elementary and secondary school students in the country today, 12 million will not finish high school, and two-thirds of the dropouts will come from the unfocused general education population. Over 43 percent of the high school students in the United States today are enrolled in general education programs that prepare them for neither work nor college. So while trying to solve our nation's problem of an insignificant workforce we have found a bigger one: how to prepare our nation's future workforce for survival.

For a long time I have been listening to business and educational groups lament the problem and I have seen enthusiastic, albeit short-lived, attempts at generating both interest in the problem and willingness to solve the problem. My argument has always been that these attempts have merely been the application of a band-aid to a wound that required major surgery. I have personally worked on several such attempts myself as well as served on countless committees to brainstorm and solve the problem.

Industry looks to the educational system to provide skilled learners; workers with the "workplace basics", workers with technical skills as well as interpersonal skills, team work, goal setting, problem solving, motivational and creative thinking to name a few. But what about the three

(Continued on page 5)

Corino (from page 4)

Rs, what about science? "Absolutely critical", states industry. More and more industry is telling us new employees do not have the math, science and communications skills not to mention the technological skills, to survive in today's workplace. The Secretary's Commission On Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) says, "All American high school students must develop a new set of competencies and foundation skills if they are to enjoy a productive, full, and satisfying life." SCANS also states, "Our nation's schools must be transformed into high performance organizations in their own right." But how can we expect the secondary school system to provide all this training, both academic and vocational education, to our future workforce, our future solution to our present day problem? And is that realistic or even fair?

If we identify our problem as unskilled, unprepared workers and we consider alternative solutions such as school-based enterprises, cooperative education, and youth apprenticeship, we must then recognize that while these programs are strong, effective challenges to our problem they alone do not address the whole problem. Students need to know they have solid options that will qualify them to go directly to work from school or move on to higher levels of education. For years the nation's secondary school course menu has been characterized by a choice between academics and vocational education. College bound students were provided with courses necessary to meet post secondary requirements and vocational students were provided with courses to prepare for technical careers. The largest group of students unsure of either one of these avenues ended up in what was called the general track, offering little preparation for higher education or employment.

Tech-Prep offers a solution to our greater problem by combining academics with job-related learning. Tech-Prep links the last two years of high school with two additional years of college. People from industry have joined in a cooperative effort with local secondary schools and colleges to develop curriculum, teach lessons, and monitor students in school. The curriculum of the Tech-Prep program integrates high-level math, science, and communication with the workplace basic skills mentioned previously like team work and problem solving, to qualify them for technically demanding employment positions or advanced schooling. The basic core courses are all taught in the applied academics mode of teaching and all classes are 90% lab activities. Each lesson for all the Applied Academics involves at least one lab activity, such as the one included on the right, to complete the learning process.

In many programs students progress at their own speed mastering basic competencies at checkpoints identified through outcomes assessments. These courses provide a foundation of basic academic skills so that students will be

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The following lab activity was taken from CORDs Applied Mathematics, Unit 21: **Calculating diagonal lengths of rectangles.**

Equipment: Tape Measure, Calculator

Statement of Problem: Drawing a diagonal across a rectangle gives two identical right triangles. In this activity, you measure the length and width of several rectangular objects. Then, you calculate the lengths of the diagonals with the Pythagorean formula and compare the calculated diagonal lengths to the measured diagonal lengths. In addition, you calculate the length of a room diagonal from a corner at the ceiling all the way across the room to an opposite corner at the floor.

Procedure: Carry out steps a, b and c (below) on each of the following rectangular objects.

- Classroom door
- Teacher's desk
- Chalkboard
- Classroom floor

a. Measure the width of the object. Record this measurement on a sheet of data paper.

b. Measure the length of the object. Record this measurement on a sheet of data paper.

c. Measure the diagonal of the object. Record this measurement on a sheet of data paper.

Calculations:

a. Use the Pythagorean formula to calculate the length of the diagonal for each object. In the Pythagorean formula, $c^2 = a^2 + b^2$, where a and b are the length and width, and c is the diagonal. **Remember to take the square root of the sum $a^2 + b^2$ to get the value of c.**

b. Compare the calculated diagonal lengths to the measured diagonal lengths for each object.

c. Next, based on material covered in the discussion part of the text for this unit, make appropriate measurements to determine the room diagonal. It will help you to draw a 3-dimensional sketch of the room and identify the room diagonal whose length is to be determined. Then identify the measurements you need to make to calculate the room diagonal. Include the sketch and measurements on your data sheet.

d. Use the appropriate measurements and the Pythagorean formula to calculate the room diagonal. How does the length of the diagonal compare with the length, width or height of the room?

Akins (from page 3)

students feel comfortable in checking the math in a physics problem, but few go farther than that. Experts will include a decision about the reasonableness of the answer, compare the answer with answers obtained to similar problems and also evaluate the effectiveness of the solution (was there a better way to solve the problem?).

I encourage the students to check the math and also the units in the problem. This is where I have them try estimating or do a quick order of magnitude calculation. Also try to have them think about the answer - does it make sense? Does it seem reasonable?

Knowledge base:

The student's knowledge base includes two areas, their knowledge about the subject matter and their knowledge about problem-solving, both general and subject-specific. The organization of the knowledge base is also important. Having the knowledge does little good if it is unavailable for use. Most experts agree that the knowledge structure is not found in the textbook. Therefore, one of my jobs in teaching the course is to make the structure of knowledge of physics clear to the students.

Making this structure clear is easier in physics than in many other subjects. (Physics is considered a "well-ordered" domain.) However, in any subject the knowledge can be presented in a hierarchical order (most general ideas first, then more specific information later) and connections between chunks of material can be made clear. There are also many external techniques available for helping students with this organization. Concept mapping (in various forms) would be one of these techniques.

Principles vs. surface features:

This characteristic is tied closely to the student's knowledge base and use of heuristics. In physics, the literature on problem-solving shows that experts classify problems according to the major principles involved and novices classify problems by their surface features (objects referred to, physical relationship among the objects, etc.).

One thing I do in class is ask students what principle is involved in the problem and then we generate an equation from that principle. I also show students that different principles can be used to solve problems with the same surface features.

Physics problems sometime deal with objects on inclined planes. Novices would tend to try to solve all inclined plane problems the same way, but they can generally be solved using energy considerations (the Work-Energy Principle) or using Newton's Second Law. Once both of these principles have been introduced, I have students solve the same problem both ways. We then discuss which way was the easiest or most efficient. I hope this also encourages them in their evaluation of problems.

I still want to encourage students to transfer some of these problem-solving skills to other classes. I do this mainly by discussion. We talk about how the major components of problem-solving work in other math and science courses (not too difficult), but I also try to show students that writing a paper for English has some of these characteristics, also. They still have to understand the problem (the topic, guidelines, etc.), they still need basic heuristics (prewriting, outlining, etc.), they still need to evaluate the solution (the paper - by editing, rewriting, etc.).

Problem-solving is a complex set of skills and behaviors that I think needs to become a way of thinking for students. As instructors, we need to help them learn general problem-solving skills as well as those that are subject-specific. We can encourage students to develop this behavior by modeling the thinking in the class and by giving the students problems for practice and evaluation that will need these skills to be successfully completed.

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Corino (from page 5)

better prepared to pursue a post secondary technical training program and subsequently a career in a technical field. Because it is goal oriented and outcome based, the Tech-Prep Associate Degree curriculum has the potential to give the hands-on learner (or concrete learner) an incentive to finish high school and eventually complete the requirements for an associate degree. Tech-Prep provides a realistic and attractive educational continuum which can not only contribute to our country's labor needs but can also address the dropout problem among our high school youth.

So remember the student in the hallway with his stop watch and understand that student is not only learning something about the relationship between distance traveled and time spent, but has also learned about the process behind the solution to the problem, has learned about problem solving, and maybe even team work.

Experiences with Cooperative Learning

Karen Goodman, Engineering Science

Cooperative learning is a standard part of laboratory work in most science courses. Students usually work in small groups (2-4 persons) to perform an experiment, identify and classify samples, read and make maps, draw scale models, learn the operation of specific instruments, etc. Students discuss the activity within their groups and often consult with other groups to compare results. Questioning the instructor is encouraged; but instead of providing answers, the instructor tries to guide students to reach their own conclusions. The laboratory atmosphere is intended to be a low-pressure one, where mistakes are not ridiculed and do not automatically lead to failure of the exercise. While laboratory reports from members of the same group are usually very similar, group members are free to disagree with the rest of the group and offer their own individual views. Each member of the group is held accountable for all aspects of the lab so that no one can blame "Jane" for the poor results because she did the measuring.

> Cooperative learning is a standard part of laboratory work in most science courses...The laboratory atmosphere is intended to be a low-pressure one, where mistakes ... do not automatically lead to failure of the exercise.

I also use group learning in the lecture portions of my introductory physics courses. Students must be able to solve word problems, an often dreaded task. I offer students a procedure to follow, do a few examples on the board, then ask them to solve one or two in class. Small groups are arranged to work on the problems. In very successful instances, there will be some students leaving their seats to seek help from or give assistance to other groups. I circulate around the room offering suggestions. This can seem chaotic and is certainly noisy, but it works! Poorer students who would just sit in their seats waiting for the correct solution to be written on the board do become involved in trying to understand the problem.

Because many beginning physics students have poor math backgrounds, many need extra help but are reluctant to come to my office for one-on-one help--they don't want to appear to be "stupid". In response, I have started to conduct one or two of my weekly office hours as group help sessions, where students can drop in at a free lab or class room, work in groups, ask questions, request a check of their homework assignments or lab reports--basically use the hour in whatever format they wish. The last time I taught physics this approach proved extremely successful and the students' attitudes became noticeably more positive about the course as a whole.

This year I have begun using group learning activities in my less quantitative physical science courses (geology, meteorology). The main difficulties have been in defining a "problem" for students to consider and in providing a structure for their discussions. Geology students have been given rocks to compare, contrast, describe and classify. Meteorology students answer questions from different sections of the text as a substitute for a lecture presentation. In each case, all groups share their findings with the rest of the class. A printed handout of all groups' topics or questions is distributed to the whole class and facilitates note-taking from the class discussion. While I have been less satisfied with these experiences than with those in my labs and physics classes, the students are enthusiastic about them. My tentative conclusion is that including some kind of group learning activity and class discussion, no matter how rudimentary, is better than a continual lecture mode.

I have a few suggestions for structuring cooperative learning activities. 1) Use small groups, 2-5 persons. 2) At first, provide one copy of the assigned problem per group to discourage group members from working individually and not participating in the group discussion. Later everyone receives a copy. 3) Assign one group member, the one with the longest hair or the one whose name comes earliest in the alphabet, for example, to be the recorder for the group. 4) Just before the groups report to the rest of the class, assign a different person (shortest hair, name last in the alphabet) to do the speaking. Eventually during the semester, if you use different criteria to choose recorders and reporters, everyone will have performed each role at least once.

> Using cooperative learning takes more time than straight lecturing, but it seems to be more effective in promoting students' understanding and improving students' attitude toward a class.

Using cooperative learning takes more time than straight lecturing, but it seems to be more effective in promoting students' understanding and improving students' attitude toward a class. (Many of my physical science students are resentful and fearful of their science requirement.) By visiting each group during the discussion period, the instructor can gain insight into how students are thinking before exam time. To counteract the time element, topics for group work must be carefully selected and structured for efficient use of time and limited time intervals for group interaction must be established. I have also reconsidered my own lecture habits and have been trying to weed out unnecessary redundance and to make students responsible for information given in the text which will not be presented

(Continued on page 8)

Dodway & Dodway (from page 2)

attitude closes the mind to forming the connections (network) needed to solve many problems. Showing the value, relevance, and applications may help improve the attitude or, sad to say, may further confuse.

Myth #5: I can't solve problems.

Many students acquire a condition known as learned helplessness. It is a state in which the feeling of being unable to help oneself is so great that an attempt is no longer even made to try. The analogue in the classroom results in students not even trying to answer questions that would put them at risk of being wrong. There is no reason to incur this risk since the teacher or another student will soon give the correct answer anyway.

Since there is a tendency not to try problems for which solutions are forthcoming if we just sit and wait, some questions need to be left unanswered until after they have been tried. This is the rationale for not publishing answers to the puzzles in the Focus. They are designed to stimulate critical thinking and provide an interesting challenge. Their value is in the attempt, not in the solution. Even if a problem is not solved, the time was not wasted. It may help develop metacognitive skill or serve as an isometric exercise for the mind.

Classroom suggestion: Be humble. Do not try to dazzle students with your brilliance giving the impression that only an expert can solve the problems. Point out that we all make mistakes and that when we see new types of problems we all have difficulty, but they can do it or they would not have gotten this far. However, they will have to work at it. Giving them a chance to work in cooperative groups helps in many ways. In this context it helps them to see that others in class are also struggling with the material. Point out that they have already overcome more difficult obstacles. As a modern cliche of teaching suggests: Be a guide on the side, not a sage on the stage. Learning takes place within the student, not externally. Our role is to facilitate that process. Addressing a "can do" student attitude is a vital part of our task.

One of the most disturbing myths is that which keeps females out of mathematics. Causes have been traced back to formative years even relating to the types of toys given to children. An example that created a stir among those sensitive to the problem is the talking doll that said "Math class is tough." After mathematics educators complained, this offending statement was eliminated from the doll's speech. Textbooks also have become more enlightened in their examples and exercises by now using women in roles previously perceived as masculine such as scientists, engineers, and doctors. Binghamton University has a grant to urge more females to take more math. This is an excellent program which encourages girls in grades 4-12. Kathryn Fisher is the project coordinator and welcomes calls for more information at (607) 777-6044.

Sharon Annan, a colleague in the BCC math department, passes along these additional Math Myths from Ruedy & Nirenberg's book Where do I put the decimal point?:

1. There is a formula to be remembered for each problem.
2. Math performance mirrors intelligence.
3. "Creative" and math don't mix.
4. There's one best way to do each problem.
5. It's always important to get the answer exactly right.
6. Math requires a good memory.
7. Math is for men.
8. Math has to be approached with cold logic.
9. You must know how you got the answer.

These myths may discourage people from trying to solve problems for some of the following FALSE reasons: Unless you are already an expert, with a logical mind, and a good memory, and a man, there is no point in trying to solve problems.

This would be laughable if it were not such a serious matter that many people act as though they believed these to be true statements. Few problems are solved by those who do not try. When false beliefs discourage people from trying to solve problems, their destructive nature needs to be addressed.

Goodman (from page 7)

in class. I'm sure many other BCC instructors with more extensive experience with group learning can offer further comments and innovative strategies.

My interest in instituting cooperative learning on a wider basis in my teaching stems partly from a conference I attended last June: Problem Solving Across the Curriculum. So many ideas about problem-solving and cooperative learning were presented that failure to find a useful one would have been difficult. The fourth annual problem-solving conference will be held this year at Hobart and William Smith College in Geneva, NY on June 23-26. Marilyn Akins and I are handling the registration for the conference this year. Information and registration forms are available from us, as well as the Teaching Resource Center. Several BCC faculty members have participated in past years and have praised the workshops and presentations they attended. Faculty from all disciplines attend, since problem-solving is not restricted to science and math. Consider participating this year; your time will be well spent.

Problem Solving in the Workplace: Future Demands to Industry and Academia

Anne Blakeslee, Business

Problem solving cannot happen unless the problem is correctly defined. At first glance we might snicker at someone's inability to define a problem. However, in any problem solving model identifying the problem is usually a difficult task.

It is often tempting to confuse the symptoms with the problem. In other words, we need to be careful not to confuse the syndrome with the disease. For example, if you meet someone with shakiness, rigidity, slowed speech ... you might think they have Parkinson's Disease. However, these symptoms--i.e. Parkinson's Syndrome--also identify many other health problems--head trauma, brain tumor, stroke, etc. Or, a company may identify low profits as the problem when, in fact, the problem could be one or a combination of several more specific problems like poor internal control, ineffective marketing, a company image problem, quality of the product...which could have caused the low profits.

You may recall in the 1970s and early 1980s major corporations in the United States regularly blamed the workers for their problems with productivity, quality...It seems clear to me that this was a misidentified problem. This is a symptom of the greater, yet more specific problem- the need for more employee training. Workers must be involved at every level of the business.

One problem solving model used in the workplace is the service management philosophy. It clearly recognizes that the workers are not, and never have been, the problem. In fact, in a quality program, workers are the solution!

Karl Albrict defines the service management approach to problem solving in the work place as "a total organizational approach that makes quality of service, as perceived by the customer, the number one driving force for the operation of the business."

This approach goes beyond the old ideas of "customer service" and has a global character (modeled after the Scandinavian concept of managing). The service management philosophy suggests that everybody has a role to play in satisfying the customer and should be able to see the matter from the customer's point of view.

This approach to problem solving seeks to build a service culture that makes excellent service to the customer a recognized mission for everyone in the organization--from the top executives down.

Have you ever been in an airport and witnessed a scene similar to this:

A young airline agent is working alone at one of the gate counters. He goes to the microphone and announces: "Attention, all passengers on Flight 007 to Binghamton--your flight has been canceled. Please report to the counter at Gate 17B."

Hostility ensues and angry passengers storm the counter...There wasn't a hint of an apology or any trace of concern for the passengers.

Here was a young, inexperienced service person trying to solve a problem he was not prepared to deal with. He tried to find a solution the best way he knew but obviously there are much better ways. However, he probably hadn't learned them.

...we, as teachers and managers, should provide the leadership and support to help our workers do a better job.

Instead of blaming the employees for poor service, we,as teachers and managers, should provide the leadership and support to help our workers do a better job. After all, the communication problem of the airline agent could have been predicted by whoever trained and indoctrinated this young man. Academia, too, has a role to play if we are to truly reach total quality in our businesses--through promotion of good communication skills and emphasis on the whole quality concept.

Yes. This is easy to say and certainly hard to do especially when I'm not sure anyone has all the answers. In fact, many of us are not even in agreement on the definition of "total quality management." But one thing is certain--no matter how it is defined and what it accomplishes--it means that we (in private enterprises, schools, health care, government programs...) must face a demanding, difficult, never-ending effort to improve. As David Langford, the teacher, said, "if it were easy, everyone would have done it by now. It isn't easy; it is worthwhile."

Service management as an all encompassing approach is one problem solving method that can be used to move our businesses into a service-oriented, customer-driven mode--but it won't happen without a cooperative partnership between business and academia.

"There are no such things as service industries whose service components are greater or less than those of other industries. Everybody is in Service."

--Theodore Levitt
Editor, Harvard Business Review

Problem Solving to Teach Problem Solving

Denise Abrams, Physical Therapy Assistant Program

For a Physical Therapist Assistant problem solving is a constant requirement. A patient arrives and begins to walk toward the waiting clinician. The observations begin: does the patient limp more than yesterday, is the leg more red and swollen, does the patient favor the leg, will the treatment need to be altered, should the primary Physical Therapist be contacted? This all occurs before the first hello and continues until the patient leaves the department. Now it's my turn to problem solve. As an instructor, how can I teach a student to think in a logical manner, and develop reliable answers to problems? After brainstorming, attending classes on creative problem solving, contacting experienced instructors and asking a lot of questions, I felt confident beginning to teach the process of problem solving and trying to instill basic skills.

The basic technique I use in the classroom is to continually ask students for feedback. I let the students ask and answer questions. To encourage both problem solving strategies and a feeling of success, students are directed to find answers themselves. I believe if problem solving becomes a habit and a norm instead of an exception, the strategies will begin to carryover to other classes and to life in general. Students become more curious and observant over time.

Cooperative learning techniques are also used in the classroom to encourage problem solving. The student becomes an active participant instead of a passive observer. They may be required to research and report to the class, be involved in a group project or, as in their senior year, prepare and teach a class on a subject within the curriculum. The student is well supported throughout the process by myself and their peers. The support given is in the form of directing their questions. For instance, I may point out a weakness in a students presentation and ask if they could suggest ways to strengthen it. In this way I accomplish two things: one, I am sure the student is addressing the material correctly; two, I am asking the student to develop options to solve the problem on their own. It's fun to watch the students become creative as they begin to contact past instructors, research librarians and other professionals in an attempt to solve their problem. I believe this a positive indicator that they are beginning to problem solve on their own. I always include kudos along the way. The positive feedback reinforces their use of the problem solving strategies.

Problem solving is also built into our laboratory instruction and testing. This actually occurs quite naturally. The students are instructed in treatment techniques using peers as mock patients. Peer constructive criticism is strongly encouraged to help give the students feedback on their technique. This is the time when the students discover what treatment techniques they may be having difficulties with. Again they are well supported by instructor, lab assistant and peers to work out their problems. The students are then tested on their technique. The test is competency based. The students are presented with a mock patient and a problem and are required to solve the problem. The end result is the proper administration of a learned treatment.

In conclusion, problem solving is so fundamental to the profession of Physical Therapy that I stress it's importance in the classroom. The strategies I use to promote problem solving ability is to actually practice problem solving strategies in the classroom. These strategies include encouraging students to answer their own as well as their peers questions, developing laboratory experiences that require a lot of problem solving and critical thinking, encouraging creative thinking strategies, and using a lot of positive reinforcement. Above all, I continue to think of ways to encourage problem solving in the classroom.

This Issue

This issue was edited by Marilyn Akins. She joined the Engineering Science department, where she teaches physics and physical science courses, in 1981. She became interested in problem-solving while working on her PhD at Cornell.

Coming Next Issue

The May issue of *Center Stage* will focus on Civic Education and will be edited by Ben Kasper. Editors for fall issues are needed. Please contact the publication manager if you would like to edit an issue, suggest a topic, or provide and article for publication.

Articles are usually 500 words, but may be longer or shorter. Articles should be submitted to the Teaching Resource Center one to two months before publication. Electronic copies of articles are appreciated. Please contact the Teaching Resource Center for instructions and assistance.

Send correspondence and contributions to the publications manager:

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Civic Education to Produce Civic Competence

JoAnne Maniago, History and Social Science

A rather extensive and detailed list of things that constitute Civic Competence was submitted for discussion by the Civic Education Committee a few years ago. In general it listed four areas required for civic competence:

1. Concepts of what constitutes a democratic culture.
2. Knowledge of Democratic institutions and practices.
3. Values and principles of constitutional democracy.
4. The role of citizens in a democracy including communicative skills for effective participation.

This a good inclusive list, but there are a number of questions which must be answered by schools which aim to accomplish civic competence. First, there seems to be an assumption in all the discussions I've been privy to that schools used to produce "good citizens", but don't anymore.

When I was in eighth grade in the 1940's, we had a year of what was called Civics. It was lots of fun though I must admit I never remembered much of it after class was over. Structure and operations of US government wasn't presented to me until I took a basic course as a college freshman. The problem with that was that I was the only girl from my neighborhood who went on to college. Four boys went, but

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This issue of Center Stage has been written by individuals who share a strong commitment to civic education. Experience has also made us somewhat humble about what education can achieve. JoAnne recognizes that various structures and institutions which reinforced civic education may no longer exist. We clearly need to define civic competence and then examine a variety of strategies for implementation. JoAnne Maniago is the Director of the Honors Program and teaches American Government and U.S. History. She is a recent recipient of the Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence. She has a Ph.D. from Boston University.

George Higginbottom, who has been the leading proponent of General Education, argues that citizenship skills are at the core of higher education. He describes a strategy to help the college define, implement and assess a civic education requirment. We would like to have graduates who display tolerance, respect for each other's rights, and a sense of procedural fairness. George Higginbottom recently received his Ph.D. from Cornell University. His dissertation was an extensive analysis of civic education in the American educational system. Dean Higginbottom is also a recipient of the Chancellor's Award for Excellence.

Larry Truillo advocates a community service component as part of General Education. Larry has been involved in such a proposal for several years and his interest is a reflection of discussion in the SUNY system and the national proposal relating financial aid to community service. A major obstacle which Larry discusses is the course load and working schedule of the majority of students. Larry recently attended a state wide conference on community service.

Mary Ann Throup offers a case study of community service. She has played a major role in organizing the CHOW campaign at the college. The students have responded in a very positive way to the food drive. It is anticipated that the program that Mary Ann initiated will continue over the years under new leadership. Mary Ann has a Ph.D. in Economics from Binghamton University.

I do want to express my appreciation to all those who took the time and effort to write an article. It is important for us to reflect on our educational objectives. Center Stage plays a vital role in expanding that reflection to a dialogue involving the college community.

--Ben Kasper, Editor

Maniago (from page 1)

they were in science or business and avoided any contact with political subjects. Therefore from my experience with the public school system in my day they were no better at imparting civic competence than the present system. Why then do we assume they were? First, because the definition of "civic competence" until 1960 simply consisted of three things:

A good citizen should (1) vote, (2) obey the law, and (3) never question the politicians and political structure. This was taught not only in the public school, but also in most homes, churches, in all kinds of children and youth organizations, and in the informative as well as entertainment media.

> It was not necessary for any but those who would be the leaders to know about the realities of the political and governmental system.

These were practical, concrete concepts and with all of society drilling them in, most citizens knew and obeyed them. It was not necessary for any but those who would be the leaders to know about the realities of the political and governmental system. Average citizens never worried about the Constitution. His/her betters would handle all that. Just trust you lives and your country to them. And we did!

Then in the 1960's came the Civil Rights Movement and Vietnam. The nation's college and university youth who had been exposed to more in-depth reading and discussion about the meaning of constitutional democracy and the real political system led protests at what they perceived to be misuse of power. They succeeded in breaking the silent stranglehold of legal segregation, forced a president not to run for a second term, and finally forced another president to pull out of the conflict. Then came WATERGATE (remember?) and the stunning revelation that our political and governmental systems were not perfect. Neither were the men who ran them. Many citizens decided that there couldn't be any such thing as good government or an honest politician so they dropped out. The percentage of population voting dropped in spite of both the minorities and youth between 21 and 18 having achieved suffrage. The general public indicated distrust and dislike of politics and politicians. As usual in our society, the schools got the blame, and looked around for how they could remedy the situation.

CAN the public schools actually create civic competency? In my opinion, no, at least not alone. Even before 1960 with only three simple concepts to put across, the schools didn't teach alone. Family, church, community, and media helped. Today with the expanded requirements and more complex definition of civic competence, the question becomes, what civic education can schools do and how can they do it?

> Today with the expanded requirements and more complex definition of civic competence, the question becomes, what civic education can schools do and how can they do it?

When I asked my students to list the things they felt were necessary for civic competence, their responses centered on #2, knowledge of institutions and practices, which can be taught in a school setting. At Broome in our Introduction to U.S. Government course I found that we must start with such basic definition of terms and structures, little time is left in one semester for theoretical or philosophical discussion.

Only the criminal justice students are required to take even that much course work. Most Broome students receive no exposure to constitutional government and institutions or citizen participation in that system. Some will haphazardly be exposed to such information through history, public policy, and some sociology courses, but again, not all students take these courses.

Then what can B.C.C. do about civic education? All community colleges must be more realistic in their goals (civic competence) and how those goals can be achieved (civic education). We cannot do all the jobs of the public schools, family, community youth programs, and the public media in a one semester course even if everyone was required to take it. We can realistically be expected to offer a course in basic U.S. government and citizen participation. Other faculty may deliberately include public policy and citizen responsibility in their classes wherever possible. A philosophy class, ENG-220, SOS-110, SOC-111, or SOS-111 might be able to incorporate aspects of democratic values and culture, as well as citizen participation. Certain technology and business classes lend themselves to discussion on the impact of state or federal policy on that particular field. Ethical dilemmas and questions come up all the time.

> We cannot do all the job of the public schools, family, community youth programs, and the public media in a one semester course even if everyone was required to take it.

Whether this will make our graduates "competent" citizens is not guaranteed, but some will be exposed to new ideas and challenges, and who knows, those may be the citizens who will preserve democracy in the future.

Democracy is not a Place; But A Journey

Ben Kasper, History and Social Science

The belief that citizenship should be an integral part of education has a long historical tradition. Jefferson recognized the vital role of mass public education if democracy were to survive. Political socialization played a significant role in transforming a wave of immigrants into American citizens. An educational system which praised democracy, equality and certain inalienable rights however, failed to deliver that promise to all Americans. There are two contrasting reactions when we recognize that civics in high school is not the civic of the real world. One response is public apathy, indifference, or cynicism. The second response is the demand for political change and reform to bring us closer to the ideal of a democratic society.

We have observed several trends in our public life as citizens. American high school and college graduates appear to have little understanding of the political system, the political process and the Constitution. This segment of the population has one of the lowest levels of political participation during elections. The atmosphere at many college campuses has deteriorated from civil discourse into discrimination, bias, and even violence. There may be a "core" that all students should be exposed to as essential for citizenship education.

The struggle for power, conflict resolution, competition for scarce resources, and reflection about the future of our society are not necessarily reserved for a course in American government.

What role can colleges and universities play in fostering a tolerant and civil society? We can expose students to different political perspectives and explore the issue of diversity. The struggle for power, conflict resolution, competition for scarce resources, and reflection about the future of our society are not necessarily reserved for a course in American government. There are a host of other courses where these topics would be appropriate and relevant.

> Alexander Astin, U.C.L.A. writes:
> "In higher education we have tended to emphasize the so-called 'cognitive' side of learning, even though our college catalogues frequently mention 'effective' goals such as good citizenship. Democracy is, of course, based fundamentally on a cooperative concept of governance. While the idea of good citizenship in a democracy like ours necessarily includes the notion of an informed and involved electorate, recent elections suggest to me that our citizenry

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Civic Education Infusion: A Perspective

George Higginbottom, Liberal Arts and Related Careers

One of our seven General Education learning objectives commits us to enhancing our student's civic competence. The real aim of this commitment in my view is to prepare our students to participate actively and effectively in public affairs. The multiple means by which we are proposing to accomplish this --through curricular and course infusion, co-curricular programming, and community voluntarism -- require, in addition to clear goal-setting and close coordination, changes in the way we do things. In our "civic education" social science courses, for example, we are confronted with the necessity of reconceiving what we normally do in our discipline introductions or our history surveys to accommodate content relating more directly to citizenship. It is also likely that our instructional practices will need to be modified in order to be fully responsive to our citizenship goals. Helping students acquire citizenship skills and sensibilities as we define them may require substantial changes and even new courses.

The tasks, as I see them, are three-fold. First, we need to agree upon a conception of democratic citizenship and to describe as clearly as possible what sorts of knowledge, skills, and dispositions comprise it. Second, we need to specify how we are going to design our courses and our instruction so as to help students attain these civic attributes. Third, we will need to establish a plan for evaluating student learning to determine whether or not our courses and instructional strategies are advancing our civic education objectives.

A Theory of Citizenship

If we believe along with the behaviorists of the 1950's and 1960's that politics is about dividing up the material and positional goods which our system produces, we will conceive citizenship according to the theory of interest group pluralism in which one enters the public arena sporadically, not to advance a public good, but to seek private advantage. The sort of education that is best suited to this theory of citizenship is open for debate, but prominent among its constitutive values will surely be self-interest, "win-lose" competition, material aggrandizement, and a style of thinking which critics of liberalism refer to as "marketplace rationality".

If, on the other hand, citizenship is linked to concerns for justice and an ideal of a common good, and if the public sphere is viewed as politically and morally educative -- the site of cooperative efforts at setting public problems right and planning for a better future for all -- civic education's curricular and instructional agenda will need to reflect these "moral" understandings. For the sake of argument, but also

(Continued on page 4)

Higginbottom (from page 3)

out of conviction, I choose this public model of democratic citizenship over the former, self-interested one.

Participative citizenship in the mode proposed is sometimes termed "civic republicanism", its exemplars of civic practice being the ancient Athenian polis, the city-states of the Italian Renaissance, and our own Revolutionary Era. The civic republican spirit is most powerfully manifested, it is held, in public forums where neighbors gather to discuss public issues, and in so doing, transform partial and private interest into communal issues and public goods. Assuming democratic forums of this sort to be models of exemplary civic practice, what must community college citizenship education be like, we ask, if it is to sustain and nurture democratic debate and decision making directed toward a common good?

Education for Citizenship

First, and most obvious, students must have opportunities to discuss and debate public issues. They must learn how to argue a position logically: to adduce and weigh evidence carefully and fairly, differentiate factual from normative assertions, and be willing to give way to the more compelling argument. That is not to minimize the problematical aspects of such conversation, for example, conflicting truth claims, biases, distortions of facts and logical fallacies. It is, however, to suggest that discourse itself (not merely courses in speech or logic) is the most effective means of acquiring the communicative competence necessary for effective civic participation.

Second, civic communication is not an abstract art; it is about some particular subject. Thus students must also have, or come to acquire, substantive knowledge. Depending upon its complexity, knowledge of the subject at hand may be easy or difficult for students to learn. Clearly, some topics will be so complex that few will acquire more than superficial understanding of them, and it is precisely here, when confronted with the gap between expert and popular understanding, that skepticism regarding the efficacy of participative citizenship arises. But it is not essential for everyone to master the subtleties of technical discourse in order to make wise civic judgments so long as citizens are skilled in detecting reasoning errors, have opportunities to question and clarify expert testimony, and have been taught to weigh private against public interests. Ordinary people can and do make intelligent decisions on exceedingly complex issues. We need, therefore, to be closely attentive to the educational requisites of democratic conversation so as to systematically cultivate its knowledge bases, its skills, and sensibilities.

The domains of knowledge which are pertinent to civic discourse surely include the historical, the political, the behaviorial and the philosophical, but what exactly students need to know of these cannot easily be stipulated. The appropriateness of civic knowledge is in part an empirical issue and in part a conceptual one; consequently, we need to be thoughtful about both factual and theoretical knowledge when selecting textual material for our students.

The third feature of democratic citizenship which we must help our students acquire is moral personality. By that I mean the dispositional attributes and virtues of democratic citizenship which derive from the moral commitments of democratic theory, namely: tolerance, respect for each other's rights, egalitarianism, and a sense of procedural fairness. These attributes are essential features of democratic discourse, such that in conducting democratic conversations on civic issues, we are simultaneously helping our students to acquire moral personality while modelling the process of public problem solving.

Besides the democratic dispositions which comprise moral personality, students also have need of cognitively acquired moral principles, especially ones inherent in democratic theory, like freedom, obligation, reciprocity, equality, equal opportunity, justice, and fairness.

By planning our courses carefully around clearly articulated concepts, skills, and dispositions such as these, we can help prepare our students for intelligent and effective democratic citizenship. ◻◻

Kasper (from page 3)

> is probably not very well informed and certainly not very involved in the democratic process. If I were able to effect just one change in our curriculum and our implicit curriculum, it would be to put much greater emphasis on the importance of producing graduates who appreciate the importance of being well informed and active participants in the democratic process."

There are a variety of approaches to the goal of civic education. The traditional approach will look at cognitive skills and the knowledge that students should possess. Second, there is a growing trend to incorporate some form of community service as a component of higher education. Third, the classroom environment, the open inquiry, the respect for differing opinions, and encouraging critical thinking can all serve as a role for the democratic model. Needless to say educating young men and women to be contributing members of our society is a challenging task. The educator Robert Maynard Hutchins once warned: "The death of democracy is not likely to be an assassination from ambush. It will be a slow extinction from apathy, indifference and undernourishment." ◻◻

Summer Leisure Reading List, 1993

Jane Rawoof, Ann Repasky, Greta Wingate, Debbie Spanfelner, Library

Looking for something good to read this summer? The Librarians have put together a suggested reading list. The books which our Library owns are either indicated or followed by a call number.

Bernbaum, Jeffery. Lobbyists. JK1118.B47 1992.
Discusses the strategies lobbyists use to obtain set goal for their companies or organizations. Also reveals the inside operation of lobbyists and their influence on congressmen, some of whom violate the code of ethics and are forced out of office. (AR)

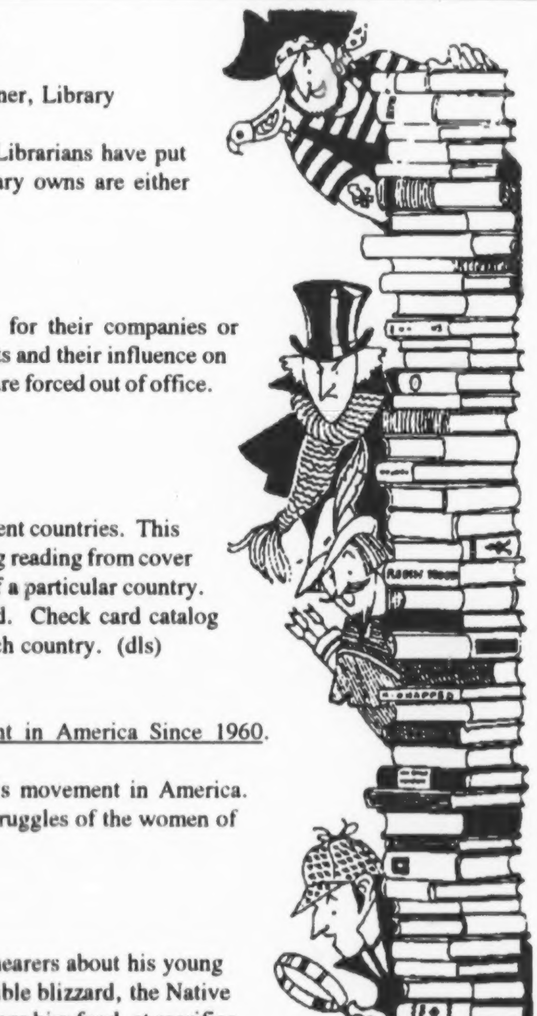
Culture Shock! Oregon: Graphic Arts Center Publishing Co.
BCC has several books in the Culture Shock series on different countries. This series of travel books is unique in that it makes for interesting reading from cover to cover. It offers insights into the customs and etiquette of a particular country. A list of addresses and recommended reading are included. Check card catalog under, Culture Shock for call numbers as they vary for each country. (dls)

Davis,Flora. Moving the Mountain; the Women's Movement in America Since 1960. NY:Simon & Schuster, 1991. HQ1426.D365 1991.
Authoritative account of the second wave of the women's movement in America. Affecting anecdotes and discussion reflect the anger and struggles of the women of the last three decades. (gw)

Leskov, Nikolai. On the Edge of the World.
In this fascinating novella, an old bishop tells a group of hearers about his young missionary days among Siberian Eskimos. Through a terrible blizzard, the Native (we never really know his name) protects the bishop and brings him food, at sacrifice to himself. The bishop realizes that he is more "Christian" than some who bear the name. The story emphasizes respect for all indigenous people and their customs. (jmr)

Mangione, Jerre and Ben Morreale. La Storia, Five Centuries of the Italian American Experience. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992.
In describing the experiences encountered by Italian Immigrants, it mirrors the universal experience of being an immigrant from any one of the European countries to the United States. It covers the contributions of the average Italian American and mentions of those made by such celebrities as Verrazzano, Sinatra, DiMaggio, Madonna, and many others. (dls)

Oldenbourg, Zoe. Massacre at Montsegur; A History of the Albigensian Crusade. NY: Dorset Press, 1961. DC83.3.O473 1990.
A re-reading of this older work brings new resonance to current political and social tensions. The persecution and ultimate decimation of the heretetical Cathars brings events in Bosnia or in Waco to the modern reader's mind. Not a beach novel, but smoothly written, easily read, and engrossing.(gw)



(Continued on page 6)

Librarians (from page 1)

Oppenheim, Phillip. Japan Without Blinders. HC462.9063 1992

Describes how Japan became the industrial power over the years and offers direction to the United States and other western countries on how to become competitive with Japan. The author suggests improvements in our business sector and education system that will enable us to have an edge on Japan. (ar)

Parks, Tim. Italian Neighbors. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1992. DG975.M67425P37 1992.

A witty account of life in Montecchio, a small town near Verona, Italy. The story reads more like a diary of the author's experiences in adapting to the customs of an Italian neighborhood. A wonderful read for the armchair traveler! (dls)

Plievier, Theodore. Stalingrad.

This novel recounts the declining fortunes of the German Army in the Battle of Stalingrad, ending in its defeat. The story is told through the eyes of two German soldiers, an officer and an enlisted man, who finally surrender willingly, as they realize the battle is hopeless. It makes a powerful anti-war statement. (jmr)

Rothschild, Mary Logan and Pamela Claire Hronek. Doing What the Day Brought; An Oral History of Arizona Women. Tuscon: Univ. of Arizona Pr., 1992. HQ1438.A6R67 1992.

Integrated and edited interviews of 30 women over 70 years old. These are strong, resourceful women - Hispanic revolutionaries,teachers, divorcees, Mormons, and politicians - who share both the exciting and the more mundane events that make up life on one of America's last "frontiers." (gw)

Russell, James E. Walks Walls and Fences. Oversize SB473.R8

The author offers many ideas for replacing or renovating decks, fences, walks, and other landscaping ideas that will make houses more attractive and enjoyable. It is a how-to-do-it yourself book with a plethora of illustrations. (ar)

Rutherfurd, Edward. Russka.

An epic novel of Russian history from pagan days to the present. Each chapter deals chronologically with one period. Against each backdrop, members of the same fictitious family are traced through the years. The family finally emigrates to the U.S. Finally, Paul, of the most recent generation, returns for a visit to his ancestral home. The same author has also written Sarum, (Salisbury Plain), using the march of English history and the related device of descendants of several families and how their lives are connected. (jmr)

Simpson, Rosemary. The Seven Hills of Paradise. PS3569.I516S5

Two Frankish (West European) brothers, one an impoverished knight and the other a clerk, take part in the unfortunate Fourth Crusade of 1204, the sacking of Constantinople, (which rests, like Rome, on seven hills.) This novel was based on the memoirs of the actual Robert de Clari; all the characters but the love interest, really existed. (jmr)

Steves, Rick. Europe Through the Back Door. 11th ed. Santa Fe, New Mexico: John Muir Publications, 1993.

The reader learns of ways to immerse himself in Europe on a budget. All sorts of travel tips abound in such chapters entitled, "Coping Abroad: Everyday Survival Skills," and "The Woman Traveling Alone." Mr. Steves shares his favorite little-known towns and hideaways. (dls)

Toth, Susan Allen. My Love Affair With England. New York: Ballantine Books, 1992.

A must read for those enamoured with England! Ms. Toth takes the reader back to England many times in sharing her travel memoirs as a student and as a teacher leading a touring seminar. (dls)

Walton, Mary. The Deming Management Method. HD38.D439W35 1986

W. John Deming whose successful management techniques were refused by American corporations in the past World War II era is discussed here, along with American companies who adopted his methodology in recent years. (ar)

Willis, Connie. Doomsday Book. NY: Bantam, 1992. PS3573.I45652D66 1992.

Enthralling novel of a 21st century history student at an Oxford college - a time when students REALLY study history - they time travel. Eager graduate student Kivrin is cycled to a 14th century English village. Unfortunately, a malfunctioning computer has placed her a few weeks too late - the Bubonic Plague has begun. Plot moves between Kivrin's developing relationships with the "locals" and her colleagues frantic attempts to retrieve her. (gw)

Wood, Christopher. The Bubble Economy. HG5773.W66 1992.

Discusses the mismanagement of funds in the Japanese financial market which will stifle Japan's economic expansion even further and have a great impact on drawing the world into a deeper recession. (ar)

Community Service and Civic Education

Larry Truillo, Placement Office

Regarding the role of civic education in academic programming and student development, it is generally believed that it is to prepare our students for responsible participation in the process of self-government. Civic education ideally should promote the development of skills and character traits in our students which contribute to the capacity for this participation. One of the charges of the Civic Education and Public Policy Committee is to investigate how to infuse into academic programming the notion of community service, with the conviction that an active participation in community is a necessary condition of democratic responsibility. Obtaining specific knowledge through course requirements is necessary, but it is not enough.

One of the charges of the Civic Education and Public Policy Committee is to investigate how to infuse into academic programming the notion of community service, with the conviction that an active participation in community is a necessary condition of democratic responsibility.

Frances Moore Lappe, of the Institute for Food and Development Policy in San Francisco, contends that we currently have a passive notion of citizenship - that the "good" citizen does no harm, is law abiding, and fulfills the minimal obligation of voting. (Experiential Education 20) What is needed is the responsibility for an active practice of citizenship. The role of community service in this transformation from the passive notion of citizenship to an active one becomes very important in student development. Out of community service comes satisfying the need to feel useful and to participate in advancing a cause one believes in. There are certainly many models of campus based community service programs in our region, including Binghamton University, Elmira College, LeMoyne College, and Cornell University - all of which are quite successful. These colleges also have the obvious advantages of being self-contained campuses, and that the vast majority of students are traditional and are free of most responsibilities our non-traditional students have, i.e. full-time jobs, child-care, single-parenthood, and others.

In a recent unscientific survey conducted by members of the Civic Education and Public Policy Committee, about 80 percent of the students responded negatively when asked if they would be interested in a course on volunteerism if there would be a required 5 hours per week requirement of community service. Respondents numbered over 500, which presented a fairly good sampling. For reasons cited above, these results were not surprising, or disappointing. In stating the obvious, while 80 percent would not commit to a community service component, 20 percent said they would. Should we then as facilitors in student development be supportive of this 20 percent? This is not to suggest that we give up on the remaining 80 percent - for with a slight nudge from us, perhaps they can be moved to at least consider a modicum of commitment to community service. How can we support the would be's and could be's. First, there is no doubt that our students listen to and respect the voices of our faculty. As coordinator of the Placement Office's on-campus recruiting program for the past 14 years, what has been a given is that when faculty encourage their students to sign up for on-campus interviews, schedules are more likely to fill up than without this encouragement. Similarly, as faculty find appropriate moments in class to share their community service experiences, some students may be motivated to reflect on their own ideas of community service involvement. Some of our faculty even include community service as an extra-credit part of their courses. The Placement Office sponsors a nonprofit career fair every other year, where our students not only discover career paths at their organizations, but what volunteer opportunities exist. All of these are ways to plant a seed in our student population for an active practice of citizenship through community service.

Let me conclude by quoting Richard Morrill, who in an article entitled, "Educating for Democratic Values" writes:

> "Eduction for democratic citizenship involves human capacities relating to judgment, to choice, and, above all, to action. To be literate as a citizen requires more than knowledge and information; it includes the exercise of personal responsibility, active participation, and personal commitment to a set of values. Democratic literacy is literacy of doing, not simply of knowing. Knowledge is necessary, but not sufficient condition of democratic responsibility."
>
> (Stanton 175-176)

Works Cited

Schultz, Steven. "The Active Practice of Citizenship." Experiential Eduction 15.2 (1990): 19-22.

Stanton, Timothy, "Liberal Arts, Experiential Learning and Public Service: Necessary Ingredients for Socially Responsible Undergraduate Education." Ed. Jane Kendall et al. Volume I. Raleigh: NSIEE, 1991.

BCC Meets the CHOW Challenge

Mary Ann Throup, History and Social Science

Broome Community College has continuously supported campus efforts to collect funds and food staples for the Community Hunger Outreach Warehouse, better known as CHOW.

CHOW was created to meet emergency food needs in our community. A program of the Broome County Council of Churches, the organization emerged to handle crisis situations which are beyond the jurisdiction of existing agencies.

In order to ensure a valid emergency, clients are referred by Social Services or Catholic Charities or other such agencies. Coordination is necessary in any such program in an attempt to eliminate abuse. Personal experience with similar programs suggests the importance of the screening process to distribute the limited resources to credible situations.

And, there is no shortage of such clients to assist. There are always the end-of-the-month crises for those receiving public assistance. In addition, our area's economic climate has created a serious strain on CHOW inventories and facilities as more and more hardship situations emerge.

The CHOW office and warehouse are located at 81 Main Street, Binghamton. A personal visit would find the basement and garage of this lovely old house overflowing with the generous outpouring of community spirit. Additional facilities have recently been made available to provide the desperately needed storage space for the programs expansion.

Space limitations are not the only constraint facing CHOW. Billie Briggs, who spearheads the entire operation, is always in need of volunteers to: handle food collections; sort the items as they arrive; distribute the boxes of food to clients, etc. If you or your organization is interested in helping with these activities, please call 724-3354. And, of course, your financial contributions "Rounding up for CHOW" at the supermarket is one of the ways to buy bread and milk and other perishables which are needed.

> Encouraging a community spirit and community activities would seem to be an integral part of the Civic Education component for our students.

If you've never been hungry, you've been very fortunate. Those of us who have known hunger don't need to be reminded of the agonizing experience, the despair, the feeling of hopelessness. And this is something we can personally help to alleviate!

We, at Broome Community College, have welcomed the opportunity to share with those less fortunate. Encouraging a community spirit and community activities would seem to be an integral part of the Civic Education component for our students. Perhaps more can be done in our respective courses to incorporate such activities.

In the meantime, we are thrilled at the enthusiastic efforts of the honor society, Phi Theta Kappa. They have been conducting the CHOW food collection on our campus this semester. The future will be in good hand with such fine young people using their talents in such compassionate activities!

This Issue

Ben Kasper is the co-chair, along with Larry Truillo of the Civic Education Sub-Committee of General Education. He prepared an early report on General Education for the college and has served on the Board of the Community College General Education Association. He has taught for over 20 years a variety of courses, but his major interests are in public policy and economics.

Coming Next Issue

The first fall issue of *Center Stage* will focus on Writing and will be devoted to "W" courses and the "W" instructors. Faculty from all divisions will share what they are doing with writing in their classrooms.

Please contact the publication manager if you would like to edit an issue, suggest a topic, or provide and article for publication. Articles are usually 500 words, but may be longer or shorter. Articles should be submitted to the Teaching Resource Center one to two months before publication. Electronic copies of articles are appreciated. Please contact the Teaching Resource Center for instructions and assistance.

Send correspondence and contributions to the publications manager:
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The Teaching Resource Center, L-211
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